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Shades of Faith Formation

Black Christian Faith Formation within Holiness/Pentecostal Churches in the UK

Fenty, Esther

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Shades of Faith Formation:

Black Christian Faith Formation
within Holiness/Pentecostal
Churches
in the UK

by Esther Dolores Fenty

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
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Abstract

Although much has been written about Holiness/Pentecostal churches established by Caribbean settlers to Britain since the 1950s, the issue of faith formation has not been addressed. Therefore, this thesis, set within the domain of practical theology is an investigation into the faith formation of children and young people within one such church; the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) UK. It identifies two research questions; 1) how is faith formed within Holiness/Pentecostal churches in the United Kingdom and 2) is there an effective intentional strategy which is theologically valid to support this.

Key concepts in faith formation, a subsidiary of Christian education were examined from the theoretical work of three interlocutors; James Fowler, Thomas Groome and Anthony Reddie. In addition, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with adult members who had attended church from a very young age and could reflect on their experiences. Along with the literature, thematic analysis of these interviews identified contributory factors in faith formation and also areas for further development.

It was observed that there are some specific departmental documents within COGIC outlining strategies for promoting the particular departmental vision, but there is no overall plan in terms of faith formation. Like most Pentecostal denominations, COGIC has not articulated a Pentecostal theology or pedagogy, thereby making an overall formalised theological strategy impossible. Nevertheless, due to the nature of Pentecostalism, there is faith formation through the liturgical practices and agencies of the church evidenced by second and third generation members of COGIC who are now involved in ministry.

Furthermore, the interface of culture and Pentecostalism within the British context contribute to the faith formation of children and young people in COGIC, (an exemplar of a Holiness/Pentecostal church) making it a unique experience. Yet faith formation can be intentional within COGIC by the promotion of a British Black Pentecostal pedagogy as recommended by this research.

Chapter 1- Setting the Scene

*Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts;
let them proclaim your power. (Psalms 145: 4 NLT)*

Introduction

From the time of their inception in Britain in the 1950s, churches started by Caribbean people have been the subject of analysis by sociologists and religious commentators. External investigators have included Malcolm Calley¹, (*Pentecostal Sects among West Indian Migrants*), Clifford Hill² (*From Church to Sect – West Indian Religious Sect Development in Britain*), and Roswith Gerloff³ (*A Plea for British Black Theologies - The Black Church Movement in its Transatlantic Cultural and Theological Interaction*). In contrast a number of insider researchers have written through their own lens; Joel Edwards et al⁴, (*Let's Praise Him Again, An African-Caribbean Perspective on Worship*), Robert Beckford⁵, (*Dread and Pentecostalism – A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain*), Mark Sturge⁶ (*Look What the Lord has Done! An exploration of Black Christian Faith in Britain*), and Joe Aldred⁷ (*Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity*). Whilst these researchers have been concerned with issues such as the history, theological, social and political impact and styles of worship, none have addressed the issue of how faith is handed down to each generation. In an unpublished PhD thesis, Maxine Howell,⁸ (*Towards a Pneumatological Pedagogy: An Investigation into the*

¹ Calley, Malcolm J *Pentecostal Sects among West Indian Migrants* Race and Class Vol. 3 No 2 1962 pp 55-64

² Hill, Clifford *From Church to Sect – West Indian Religious Sect Development in Britain* Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion Vol. 10, No. 2 (Summer, 1971), pp. 114-123

³ Gerloff, Roswith *A Plea for British Black Theologies- The Black Church Movement in its Transatlantic Cultural and Theological Interaction* (Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang) 1992

⁴ Edwards, Joel (ed.) *Let's Praise Him Again, An African-Caribbean Perspective on Worship* (Eastbourne, Kingsway publications Ltd) 1992

⁵ Beckford, Robert *Dread and Pentecostalism – A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain* (London: SPCK) 2000

⁶ Sturge, Mark *Look What the Lord has Done! An exploration of Black Christian Faith in Britain* (London: Scripture Union) 2005

⁷ Aldred, J.D. *Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity* (Peterborough: Epworth) 2005

⁸ Howell, Maxine *Towards a Pneumatological Pedagogy: An Investigation into the Development*

Development and Articulation of a Theological Pedagogy by and for Marginalised African - Caribbean Women), has investigated formation from a womanist perspective but not from an overall theory of education within Pentecostal churches.

The motivation for this project came from involvement with young people through work in secular and voluntary Christian education. From a Christian perspective, I grapple with reports that suggest that church background has a positive effect on the performance of young people in school in Britain, yet I still read about the underachievement and high exclusion rates of children, especially boys of African/Caribbean heritage. Although this notion of underachievement of Black children is challenged by researchers like Yvonne Channer⁹, (*I am a Promise - the School Achievement of British African Caribbeans*), as a member of a front line special educational needs service in schools, I am usually surprised when I become involved with a young person with behavioural difficulties who has a Holiness/Pentecostal background. This reaction is possibly due to the fact that having attended a Pentecostal Church in London from my late teens, my theological framework is not expecting to have referred for behaviour, pupils who are active in their Pentecostal churches. Whilst allowing for unintentional or intentional racism, teacher expectations, negative stereotyping of black males, there are still a number of young people (male and female) whose behaviour is exemplary at church and yet as one teacher cited 'they can quote their Bible but they don't live it'.

However, I recognise that this inconsistency in life style is not confined to young people as the media constantly recounts corruption and unholy alliances propagated by older people in churches. Nevertheless, I have pondered a number of questions for some years; why is there a dissonance between the life style of these particular young people on Sunday and the rest of the week? Is their faith unable to negotiate the demands of peer pressure? How valid is their faith? Is their faith only

and Articulation of a Theological Pedagogy by and for Marginalised African - Caribbean Women (University of Birmingham) 2012

⁹ Channer, Yvonne *I am a Promise - the School Achievement of British African Caribbeans* (Stoke-on Trent, Staffordshire: Trentham Books) 1995

based on a mental assent to Christianity? Is the Christian education work within Holiness/Pentecostal churches ineffective? This cogitation led to an interest in how faith is handed down to children and young people and how they in turn grow in their faith. In order to answer these questions, it was apparent that some research was needed. Only the research by Calley in 1962, (*Pentecostal Sects among West Indian Migrants*), had insinuated that there could be a discrepancy between life style and belief. In discussing the taboos on sex relationships outside marriage in Pentecostal churches, he purported that 'this appears to conflict with what we already know about the sexual behaviour and domestic organisation of West Indians both in the West Indies and in England'¹⁰ (*Pentecostal Sects among West Indian Migrants*). While Calley's interpretation could be viewed with caution due to the time at which he was writing, some research done in Jamaica has highlighted the issue of dissonance. Dianne Stewart,¹¹ (*Three Eyes for the Journey – African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience*), in demonstrating how the African dimensions shaped Jamaica's religious experience explained how the missionaries managed to use selected Biblical texts to support a bipolarisation of human experience among the slaves. These texts allowed the slaves to accept spiritual salvation whilst remaining in captivity. This has left a legacy which pervades Caribbean Christian experience. Stewart admits that she remains 'perplexed, however, by the cognitive dissonance in the attitudes of Caribbean peoples toward the African roots of their religious cultures'¹² (*Three Eyes for the Journey- African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience*). Diane Austin-Broos has also argued that Pentecostalism, influenced by African religion was taken up in large numbers by Jamaicans in the midst of an established British political order 'that sustained a moralised socioracial hierarchy that denigrated the Black and poor as superstitious immoralists'¹³ (*Jamaica Genesis – Religion and the Politics of Moral*

¹⁰ Calley, pgs 62 -63

¹¹ Stewart, Dianne *Three Eyes for the Journey – African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press) 2005 pg 83

¹² Stewart, pg 184

¹³ Austin-Broos, Diane *Jamaica Genesis – Religion and the Politics of Moral Orders* (Chicago: The

Orders). Her analysis revealed that Pentecostal denominations with their American influence continued to help maintain the gender hierarchy with men prevailing over women¹⁴ (*Jamaica Genesis – Religion and the Politics of Moral Orders*). Thus, whilst there is evidence of disconnect within Caribbean culture, it is interesting that it has not been raised as an issue in Britain by the researchers with a Caribbean background. Might it be possible that the disconnect in Caribbean culture between faith and ethics would be less prevalent in Britain as the context is different? Could it be a contributory but not the major factor in how faith is handed down across the generations?

In investigating how faith is handed down to succeeding generations, there is a plethora of research conducted within the historic churches with and for people of European background. There appears to be little related to Pentecostal churches where the majority of people are Black or of Caribbean descent. My interest therefore was in discovering whether there was a universal approach to how faith is formed irrespective of context or whether there was something distinctive about the way children and young people come to faith in Pentecostal churches. Despite the backdrop of disconnect in Caribbean culture, I had made an assumption that if the Christian education programme within the churches were effective then I would not be seeing the behaviour that I was concerned about nor would I be asking the questions previously outlined. Therefore, with very little published work in this area within the United Kingdom, I set out to investigate the faith formation of children and young people within Holiness/Pentecostal churches in Britain. However, in order to manage the process, the investigation was limited to one denomination in the United Kingdom.

Research Questions

I therefore identified two research questions; 1) how is faith formed within Holiness/Pentecostal churches in the United Kingdom and 2) is there an effective intentional strategy which is theologically valid to support this.

University of Chicago Printing Press) 1997 pg 116

¹⁴ Austin-Broos, pg 236

Quintessentially, the aim of the research is to discover the factors that promote faith formation within a Holiness/Pentecostal church. Bearing in mind John Westerhoff's postulation that 'the church cannot proceed to develop an educational ministry without a clear, acknowledged theological foundation',¹⁵ (*Will our Children have Faith?*), deciding whether the strategy was effective and theologically valid would involve examining the relationship between the church's espoused practices and its theological foundations (in this case Holiness/Pentecostal).

Central to the research questions is the concept of how faith is formed or Christian faith formation. Faith formation is an aspect of Christian education. A definition of Christian education which I find useful is 'the processes which people learn to become Christian and more Christian'¹⁶ ('Definitions, Aims and Approaches: an overview' in Astley, Jeff and Francis, Leslie (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Christian education: A Reader in the Aims, Principles and Philosophy of Christian Education*). The terms 'processes', 'learn', 'more and more Christian' imply moving on a journey, growth, transformation, changed from glory into glory as the apostle Paul declares in the book of Corinthians. This indicates a continuous change which not only straddles the cradle to the grave but extends into eternal life which is the hope of Christians. It is summed up succinctly by the following quote: 'For Christianity the final goal of education lay in the reuniting of fallen humanity with its creator, a goal that was essentially eschatological: though this end could be prefigured, at least in part, in this present life it was necessary to look beyond the grave for its final consummation'¹⁷ (*Religion, Education and Post-modernity*). Whilst recognising that there is a correlation between the eschatological goal and the earthly processes, it is how the latter are formulated and

¹⁵ Westerhoff 111, John H. *Will our Children have Faith?-Revised Edition* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre) 2000 pgs 25 - 26

¹⁶ Astley, Jeff 'Definitions, Aims and Approaches: an overview' in Astley, Jeff and Francis, Leslie (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Christian education: A Reader in the Aims, Principles and Philosophy of Christian Education* (Leominster, Gracewing 1994), pg3

¹⁷ Wright, Andrew *Religion, Education and Post-modernity*, (London: RoutledgeFalmer (2004) pg 128

implemented to ensure that each generation passes on the faith to its children that are the concerns of this investigation.

Faith Formation

Whilst Christian education is an umbrella term covering a wide range of activities, faith formation is more specific. The terms, formation, Christian formation or spiritual formation are also used interchangeably. Using the term, spiritual formation, Catherine Stonehouse describes its goal as ‘a maturing faith and a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ, through which we become more like Christ in the living of our everyday lives in the world’¹⁸ (*Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith*). In describing his view of Christian education, which he prefers to call catechesis, John Westerhoff argues that there are three intentional, interrelated and lifelong processes; formation (which is normative), education and instruction/training which are contributive. He defines formation as ‘the participation in and the practice of the Christian life of faith. It is a process of transformation and formation, of conversion and nurture’¹⁹ (*Will our Children have Faith?*).

However, my preferred definition of faith formation is a ‘person’s progression in faith (a gift from God) towards God with Jesus as their role model’²⁰ (‘Being and Becoming: Adolescence’ in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*). This definition and particularly the concept of progression dovetails with that identified for Christian education. When analysed carefully, it is evident that the first part of the definition encompasses the idea of moving towards maturity in faith and resonates with the admonition from the apostle Peter in chapter 3 of his 2nd epistle to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This progress is expected for all Christians but its practical outworking will vary according to the context. The next part of the

¹⁸ Stonehouse, Catherine *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey : Nurturing a Life of Faith* (Michigan: BridgePoint Book) 2000 pg 21

¹⁹ Westerhoff, pg 140

²⁰ Bryan, Jocelyn ‘Being and Becoming: Adolescence’ in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood* (Peterborough: Epworth), 2007, pg 140

definition, the 'gift of faith' accords with the Biblical doctrine espoused by the apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians; namely that our salvation is a gift of God. Although, this definition does not mention the Holy Spirit, as a Pentecostal, I would add that this progression in faith is through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the subject under investigation is how children and young people progress in faith (a gift from God) towards God through the power of the Holy Spirit with Jesus Christ as their role model. By daring to consider the issue of and use the term faith formation, I am aware that I am advancing into new territory within my denomination in the United Kingdom. It is not that the concept is new because as a 'Classical' Pentecostal denomination that subscribes to the three stage process of salvation (saved, sanctified and being filled with the Holy Spirit), there is an assumption that there is growth or progression in faith. From visiting the churches in the denominations and conventions, I am aware that there are expositions on the subject through the sermons. Furthermore, the fact that there are established departments for children and youth indicate that there is an expectation of commitment and growth for children and young people. However, it is not articulated as faith formation.

Both within COGIC and externally, the notion of faith formation itself is deliberated as every generation and each denomination tries to wrestle with the issue of passing on the faith to their children and young people. Thus, the study of faith formation becomes contemporary in a particular context and time. Due to the relative newness of Black Holiness/Pentecostal churches in Britain in comparison with the historic churches, the issue of faith formation is particularly pertinent and relevant as the new churches seek to communicate its faith to another generation. One could maintain that a wealth of information already exists within the historic churches that could be useful for the new churches. However, whilst one can learn from the experience of others who have trodden a similar path, the issue of denominational loyalties and culture indicates that consideration needs to be given to the specific issues raised by different contexts. Bearing in mind that some theologians such as Stephen

Bevans,²¹ (*Models of Contextual Theology*), have argued that theology is always contextual (subsuming all other forms e.g. Black theology, feminist theology), the subject of context is essential in the investigation of faith formation. Whilst there are beliefs that Christians have in common about the gospel of Jesus Christ (birth, death, resurrection), the way that people respond and live out their faith is done within a cultural context. Hence there is a need for this investigation.

The particular church tradition in which this investigation is based is the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) within the United Kingdom; a familiar setting to me. This is described in Chapter 2. The biographer of Charles Mason, founder of COGIC noted that Mason the son of former slaves, incorporated some elements of slave worship 'battling to retain and preserve a cultural tradition and expression as much as to preserve a theological perspective on biblical grounds'²² (*Bishop C H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*). However, I am mindful that the roots of COGIC UK came via the Caribbean to the UK. Therefore, while the African slaves in the Caribbean shared similar experiences to those in America, there were other ways in which their lives were different. Consequently, it is possible that Mason's original intentions for COGIC were modified within the context of the Caribbean. That culture and context can shape the sharing of the gospel is demonstrated by Bevans' identification of six models of contextual theology along a continuum²³ (*Models of Contextual Theology*). Whilst it is not the premise of this work to describe these here, I am hoping that the different context (a Black led church denomination) in which this research is conducted will show the interrelationship between culture and context and faith formation. In addition, it is anticipated that the outcome will eventually lead to an approach to faith formation that draws on the experience and culture of Black people within a Holiness/Pentecostal church in the UK; one which

²¹ Bevans, Stephen B *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll N.Y: Orbis Books), 2002 pg 3

²² Clemmons, Bishop Ithiel C *Bishop C H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ Centennial Edition* (California: Pneuma Life Publishing) 1997, pg 31

²³ Bevans, pg 1

will be useful to other denominations and those interested in the Christian education of Black people.

Scriptural premise

Nowhere is the scriptural premise seen more clearly than in Old Testament passages such as Deuteronomy 6:7, where the message from Moses is for parents to teach their children about their experience of faith; i.e. the history of God's saving acts celebrated through beliefs, family life and festivals. Stonehouse points out that this charge was given to the whole faith community²⁴ (*Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith*). Therefore, as the task of parental responsibility was given within the community of faith, it would imply that the community had a supporting role. The Ashanti proverb of 'it takes a village to raise a child' would be relevant here. A perusal through the Gospels indicates that Jesus said much about the position and value of children, but little about specific responsibilities of parents and society in passing on the faith. However, the fact that the Gospels (e.g. Matthew 18: 1-10) recorded that he placed a child within the midst of the crowd as he talked about their value indicates that he expected society to value them. Leslie J Francis and Jeff Astley surmised that 'the Gospels give the clear impression that people perceived him (Jesus) as concerned with children'²⁵ (*Children, Churches and Christian Learning: A Practical Resource*). From the scene in Matthew 18: 1-10, and Luke 18: 15-17, one could gather that children were very much a part of the multitudes that followed Jesus. Dave Gidney suggested that children were impacted by the visual and symbolic practices of Israel's public worship in which they participated; especially the festivals where children were encouraged to ask about the ceremonial rituals and were given an explanation by their parents²⁶ (*Children in the Heart of God: A Biblical Perspective for Church and Home*). It could be assumed therefore that from the episode in Luke 2, that Jesus made the

²⁴ Stonehouse, pg 24

²⁵ Francis, Leslie J and Astley, Jeff (eds.) *Children, Churches and Christian Learning : A Practical Resource* (London: SPCK) 2002 pg 10

²⁶ Gidney, Dave *Children in the Heart of God: A Biblical Perspective for Church and Home* (Eastbourne: Kingsway Communication Ltd) 2003 pg 134

annual journey to the temple in Jerusalem to worship and that he accepted the synagogue life where it applied to children.

The position on teaching children in the New Testament is left to the apostles who espouse similar views to those of the Old Testament. The admonition from the apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:1 is for parents to nurture their children and not to exacerbate them. When it is considered that the letter to the churches was read aloud within the context of the church community it is possible to conclude that the church has a supporting role. From the plethora of programmes published within Christendom for use either in Sunday School, Junior/Children's Church or Youth meetings, it would seem then that the Church worldwide has interpreted this role as one that involves providing direct teaching to children and young people. Furthermore, it can also be argued that the process of the hidden curriculum (those things which are not intentionally planned but nevertheless have a profound effect on practice) lends itself to some indirect teaching within church. Therefore this investigation aims to show the combination of both formal and informal approaches that are used by the church.

Methodology

Implicit within the concept of faith formation are issues of teaching and learning; either formally through planned programmes or informally through the process of socialisation within the church. COGIC is not dissimilar in having these processes. Its history illustrates the dynamics within its milieu; its roots are in the USA, but in Britain, it was founded by Caribbean migrants to the UK who brought their own cultural and religious perspective of holiness within a Pentecostal church. Moreover, as a growing church, the dynamics are further complicated by the influence of an evolving Black British Caribbean culture. In attempting to investigate how faith is formed within COGIC, consideration therefore needed to be given to a suitable methodology which would elucidate the contemporary and practical issues within this particular context. The research questions

were determining factors in guiding me to the discipline of practical theology.

Practical Theology

The strength of practical theology in relation to investigating a subject of this nature is recognised by a number of writers. Firstly, the concerns of practical theology make it a suitable discipline for this work. Among the three main areas of concerns of practical theology outlined by James Woodward and Stephen Pattison,²⁷ (*The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*), two are relevant in this context. These are 1) a discipline concerned with the life and activity of the church as it exists in the present; 2) a theological discipline looking at an area of Christian practice which seeks to bring theological criteria to bear on contemporary and realms of individual and social action. Faith formation is concerned with how people discover, learn about God and live this out practically. It falls under the remit of Christian education; an area of Christian practice. It is a contemporary issue and the project is seeking to investigate and change action within the church and indirectly within the home, although not necessarily directly impacting on wider social action. The concerns of practical theology are also noted by Gerben Heitink²⁸ who describes it as a theory of crisis as it responds to the upheaval and attempts to address the problems in modern society. He defines it as a theory of action which 'is the empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society'²⁹ (*Practical Theology: Manual for Practical Theology*). Thus, practical theology is concerned with the action that arises from the process through which the gospel is mediated through human channels and the context in which this occurs. The process may happen in large or small groups, organisations or through personal encounters in conversations. The context may be in school, home or church but always within the wider context of society and

²⁷ Woodward, James and Pattison, Stephen *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing) 2007 pg 5

²⁸ Heitink Gerben, *Practical Theology: Manual for Practical Theology* (USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1999 pg 1

²⁹ *Ibid*, pgs 6-9

Heitink stresses that there is always a relationship between the process and the context. Correspondingly, the project is concerned with how the gospel is mediated within a particular context i.e. how faith is formed within COGIC and how children and young people live out their faith in contemporary society. The relationship between the process of faith formation and the context of this church is also being explored.

The research questions on how faith is formed within Holiness/Pentecostal churches and whether there is an effective intentional strategy which is theologically valid to support this could broadly fit under the umbrella of pedagogy; the science of teaching. Although learning is not directly mentioned in the definition, the concept of teaching assumes that learning is taking place. In considering the issue of teaching and learning, Anthony Reddie noted that this process is one of the principles on which practical theology is founded. The issue under investigation relates to one of its foundational principles. Another basic principle outlined by Reddie is the dialogue between how people think about God and how they put their ideas into practice. At the heart of this relationship between theory and practice is theological reflection which refers to the way ideas of God are investigated or interrogated³⁰ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). This view of theological reflection is also supported by John Swinton and Harriet Mowat who propose that 'Practical theology is critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practice in, to and for the world'³¹ (*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*).

However, to locate it within a particular discipline is not as easy as it appears. There are arguments within practical theology about the premise of an investigation necessitating different methodological frameworks.

³⁰ Reddie, Anthony, *Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation* (Peterborough: Epworth Press) 2003 pgs 3-4

³¹ Swinton, John and Mowat Harriet *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press) 2006 pg 6

Johannes Van der Ven,³² (*Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach*), suggests that one's view of practical theology depends on one's concept of the church. He therefore advocates that the church should focus not only on self existence, or the immediate reality outside it, but on the systems within society that may or may not interact with it.³³ Based on his theoretical position of a hermeneutic communicative paradigm, (the verbal and non-verbal interpretation and communication of written and spoken texts),³⁴ he proposes that theology should be an empirical discipline using the methods of social science to explain, describe and test theological ideas.³⁵ For Van der Ven, the starting point of practical theology is the context and his premise is that God is not the direct object of theology but the human experience of him, and our communication with and about him.³⁶ However, Mark Cartledge,³⁷ (*Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*), is critical of Van der Ven for his emphasis on communicative intent and the imbalance in some of his methods, where social science techniques have equal weight with or informs theological systems. Asserting that dialectic underpins models in practical theology, Cartledge therefore proposes a dialectical approach which combines some of the empirical techniques used by Van der Ven while claiming to maintain a dominant theological system. Cartledge surmises that the starting point of practical theology is the theologian with a spirituality that arises from a particular ecclesiastical tradition with which he engages with his life world and the system and theological identity.³⁸ Cartledge describes this as a system of exploration and discovery in a search-encounter-transformation. Whilst recognising the importance of context as is necessary in this study and the spirituality of the theologian (acknowledging my Pentecostal background), I would agree with Swinton and Mowat that 'God and the revelation that God has given to human

³² Van der Ven, Johannes *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Press) 1998

³³ Ibid pg 38

³⁴ Ibid pg 41

³⁵ Ibid pgs 78 -83

³⁶ Ibid, pg 29

³⁷ Cartledge Mark J *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers) 2003 pg 38

³⁸ Cartledge, pg 27

beings in Christ is the true starting point for all Practical Theology. The discipline of Practical Theology emerges as a response to and recognition of the redemptive actions of God- in- the- world and the human experiences which emerges in response to those actions³⁹ (*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*). For Swinton and Mowat, the starting point for practical theology is God. I would concur with this based on the view that God's interactions with the nation of Israel and the actions of Jesus on the cross portray God as redeemer intervening in the lives of his people to change their situations. This view also correlates with a Biblical perspective of faith (outlined under the definition of faith formation) as a gift from God and not something to be negotiated, manipulated and measured objectively as in Van der Ven's idea of communicative intent. Thus recognising that the starting point is God would not undervalue the place of experience, context or the role of the researcher, but it would recognise the sovereignty of God in using human experience in prompting researchers to areas of concern so that action can be taken. While celebrating the 50th year of Dr Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream speech' in 2013, I maintained that this speech and the part of Christians in the Civil rights movement was prompted not only by the experience of injustice within society but by the God of justice who wanted people to take action about their situations. Thus, the techniques of social sciences could still be employed, and Cartledge has pointed out that both the pastoral cycle and the empirical theology of Van der Ven are both empirical in different ways⁴⁰ (*Practical Theology and Empirical Identity*). However, the task is to 'enable the Church to perform faithfully as it participates in God's ongoing mission in and to the world'⁴¹ (*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*). Thus the emphasis through the investigation is about seeking to find out about God's revealed plans for that specific situation.

Therefore I attribute the prompting of this research to God after having gone through the experience of noting the children in school. The research

³⁹ Swinton and Mowat, pg11

⁴⁰ Cartledge, Mark *Practical Theology and Empirical Identity* EuroJTh (1998)7:1, 37 -44 pg 42

⁴¹ Swinton and Mowat pg 25

follows the model of doing theology outlined by Frances Ward,⁴² see, judge, act. ('Methodological Approaches: Practical Theology' in Cameron Helen, Richter Philip, Douglas Davies and Ward Frances *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook*). Ward explained the 4 stages of the model as: experience, exploration, reflection and action. The see stage covers both the experience and the exploration stages. The experience was the prompting by God that led to the research questions of faith formation in COGIC. The exploration stage followed with gathering data; i.e. researching the literature on faith formation, identifying the interlocutors for this project and interviewing participants. The reflection or judge stage was the thematic analysis of the data and the interaction with the literature to formulate how faith is formed within COGIC and what God is revealing about changes for the future. The action stage of this research is the recommendation and implementation of how faith formation can further be strengthened so that it impacts upon the practice of the church.

It was therefore evident that in keeping with the methodology of Practical Theology, this was going to be a qualitative study. Heitink, (*Practical Theology: Manual for Practical Theology*),⁴³ explained that Practical Theology is an umbrella term for disciplines with a common factor related to ministry with a methodology that is linked to the social sciences. It was therefore decided that an examination of theoretical views of how faith is formed was needed. In addition, it was important to reflect the context and therefore to listen to the perspectives of those whose faith had been formed in COGIC. It was also intended to examine the paper work (leaflets, Sunday School and Bible Study materials). However, it became apparent that these were not kept in any systematic form and that there was no written information on faith formation.

⁴² Ward, Frances 'Methodological Approaches: Practical Theology' in Cameron Helen, Richter Philip, Douglas Davies and Ward Frances *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook* (London: SCM Press) 2005 pgs 23 -24

⁴³ Heitink, pg 1

Theoretical Work

For the theoretical work, key concepts in Christian education drawing particularly from the work of James Fowler,⁴⁴ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*), Thomas Groome,⁴⁵ (*Sharing Faith: A comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*), and Anthony Reddie,⁴⁶ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*) were examined. Fowler and Groome are experienced American researchers with a Eurocentric background. Fowler was chosen because of his influence in Christian education, especially within the historic churches. Fowler takes a developmental approach to faith formation where one is expected to move through 6 progressive stages of faith; attaining one level of faith before moving to another. Fowler's cognitive approach to faith development contrasts with that of Groome's although Groome adheres to Fowler's stages. Groome's key concept is meaning, and his praxis model aims to bridge the gap between the Gospel and people's everyday lives so that they can practically live out their faith in the world. He uses a dialectic approach to enable people to critique and interpret their experiences in the light of the Christian faith. Fowler's cognitive approach contrasts with the more practical approach. Reddie is a Black UK researcher with parents from Jamaica. He has a Methodist background and has developed an African-centred scheme of learning and teaching which he calls a Black Christian education of liberation. There is an interrelation with Groome's work as Reddie acknowledges Groome's influence but Reddie brings a Black perspective through his use of Black theology. Unlike Fowler and Groome, Reddie does not use stages but like Fowler, he draws on some psychological concepts to enable his curricula materials to relate to different age groups. Reddie's

⁴⁴ Fowler, James W *Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, (San Francisco: Harper Press) 1981

⁴⁵ Groome, Thomas *Sharing Faith A comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry The way of Shared Praxis* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, Oregon) 1991

⁴⁶ Reddie, *Nobodies to Somebodies*

work was ground breaking in that he was the first to develop such materials in Britain. Although not Pentecostal, Reddie was chosen because his work is an attempt to place Black Christian education in context within Britain and he has worked with a similar group of people to those in this investigation. The theoretical work was important in influencing the next stage as concepts from these authors were useful in formulating interview questions.

Interviews

As a comparison with the theoretical work, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews with people over the age of 18 who, as adults could consent to these interviews and could reflect on their faith experiences in COGIC and its role in their faith formation. The questions were structured in that all participants were asked the same questions but there was flexibility for further probing and following up responses. There was an acknowledgement that asking adults to recall childhood experiences might mean that their memories may not be accurate but nevertheless, comparison of their different views across the data set could yield valuable data. Whilst recognising that their views could also be subjective, this was balanced by a belief that people's views of their experiences are valid. I was also very aware that although the interviews are based on stimulus response theory of cognition and behaviour and the idea that the interviewer's presence should affect neither the respondent's perception of a question or the answer, there is no such thing as a completely neutral interviewer. Furthermore, as an insider and a head of an auxiliary department within the church, there could also be perceived issues of power which would affect the responses.

Nevertheless, this method was chosen not only for the depth of information it could yield but also for the opportunity, as Jennifer Mason,⁴⁷ (*Qualitative Research*), emphasised, to construct data and knowledge in the interaction through the interview. Mason also highlighted that the semi-structured interview is an interactional exchange of dialogue and the

⁴⁷ Mason, Jennifer *Qualitative Research* 2nd ed. (London: Sage) 2002, pg 62

informal face to face style is more like a discussion than a formal question and answer format. I also discovered that this method worked better than structured interviews and questionnaires which I had used previously because, as Mason explained, I had a number of themes that I wanted to explore and it also allowed me to generate more⁴⁸ (*Qualitative Research*). The semi-structured interviews were also important especially as written data relating to faith formation was not available.

Although, there might have been some advantages in using questionnaires, they would not have given the depth of information required. Earl Babbie noted that questionnaires are more reliable as they are easier to keep participants anonymous, more economical than interviews in terms of time and money and can be mailed. The disadvantage is the low percentage of responses⁴⁹ (*The Practice of Social Research*). Even when the advantages are considered, in terms of anonymity and economy, for the purposes of this investigation, the questionnaire would not have been suitable. The interview was more appropriate in being able to describe what was happening in terms of faith formation and in generating themes from the data. The advantages in conducting interviews are; for example, a higher response rate than mail surveys, the presence of the interviewer decreases the number of 'don't knows and no answers, the interviewer can probe, clarify and observe respondents as well as ask questions.⁵⁰ As Babbie also stressed, the interview is better for handling more difficult and open ended questions. He also noted how questions mean different things to different people; therefore in an interview, the interviewer is able to answer questions concerning both the purpose of the interview and any misunderstandings experienced by the interviewee.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Mason, pg 62

⁴⁹ Babbie, Earl *The Practice of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning) 2010 pg 351 -352

⁵⁰ Ibid pg 275

⁵¹ Ibid, pg 352

Schedule

The interview schedule was designed to investigate specific themes in terms of faith formation within COGIC UK. These were based on a combination of the work of the interlocutors and knowledge of COGIC as an informed member of COGIC. The questions were divided into 10 main subjects with sub topics for each area, making a total of 36 questions (Appendix 1). The first question was about the background of the participants (including age and gender) to ascertain whether differences in age and gender revealed any differences in responses. The last was about future actions for the church which invited participants to offer suggestions for improvements in the future. The work of the interlocutors (Fowler, Groome and Reddie) outlined in chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively informed the other questions. Both Fowler and Groome adhere to stages of development although differing on definitions of faith and how faith grows. Fowler's model is individualistic and Groome's is communal and questions aimed to ascertain both the participant's perception of how they were growing in faith and the use they made of support systems within the church such as Sunday School, Youth Meetings, new believers / baptism classes and reading materials/daily devotions. Thus without influencing participants by using the word stages, the main interview questions focused on the following: time spent within the church, growing in faith, how participants were supported in their growth in faith, challenges, individual responsibilities or strategies for discipleship, knowledge of Statement of Faith or Doctrines of COGIC, roles and responsibilities in church and the church's role in preparing participants to face the wider issues in society. Questions about doctrine were also influenced by Fowler, Groome and Reddie who propose different ways of knowing and how these impact on our Christian practices; the intention was to compare the responses of participants, raised with a Pentecostal epistemology with the theories of the interlocutors. The questions on the role of the church in addressing cultural/racial issues were informed by Reddie's work especially on the interrelation between being Black and being Christian.

Sample

Participants were chosen on the basis that they had been part of COGIC from a very young age. These were people who had grown up in the church and had chosen to remain. It was felt that they would be knowledgeable of their faith journey within the church and would provide information on how they had been supported or unsupported by the church. It was important to gain a cross section of people. My interest in investigating the project was explained to the Bishop of the church as a matter of protocol. He agreed to inform the Pastors when they met at a Ministers' Meeting and to notify them to expect further information from myself. A letter was sent to the Pastors of all the churches explaining the project (Appendix 2) and inviting participants to listen out for notices in the main conventions. Notices were given out in the General Convocation (August 2012) and those who were interested were invited to meet with me. Some interest was expressed and those who attended the meeting were given the information sheet (Appendix 3) for further consideration.

Originally, it was felt that 20 people would be reasonable. However, as the data was being gathered, the number was reduced to 10 due to the richness of the data from the initial interviews and the recognition of the time it takes to read and re-read data. Thus, comparing themes systematically across a smaller number of participants would lead to a more thorough investigation. Participants were asked for their consent to audio record the interviews. Whilst it was recognised that audio recording could yield analysis of unimportant parts of the interview resulting in the production of too much data and that some people may be more cautious in their responses because of the tape recorder, I believe that this was balanced by the following:- audio recording allowed me to concentrate on the process of the interview and the verbal and nonverbal responses of the participant without having to take extensive notes; this enabled the interview to flow smoothly and allowed participants to become more relaxed. Listening to the tape before transcription enabled me to record nonverbal actions such as the tone, pauses, laughter; during a practice session of note taking while listening to an interview during a course I

undertook on interviewing, I became acutely aware how easily salient information can be missed without recording. The transcription also provide opportunities for more in-depth analysis as the material was revisited and recoded as more evidence emerged and themes or patterns detected.

Analysis

The data was analysed using Thematic Analysis. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke describe this as ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’⁵² (*Using Thematic Analysis in psychology: Qualitative Research in Psychology*). The authors also note its flexibility in providing a ‘rich and detailed, yet complex account of data’.⁵³ The method was chosen to reflect the reality and experiences of the participants within COGIC in order to ascertain how faith is formed within COGIC. Through listening to the interview tapes and reading the transcripts, the data corpus consisting of all the interviews was read and general codes, (theory driven) were identified firstly as being relevant to the research question. Appendix 4 is an example of how this was done with one of the participants. These were then matched with codes from the data set of the responses to each question. Appendix 5 is an example of how this was done with the responses from all of the participants to one question. The codes were collated according to prevalence and then sorted into different groups to form a number of overarching themes and subthemes. This process generated a number of codes leading to reviewing and collapsing of themes before deciding on the main themes (Appendix 6). During the process, it was noted that codes sometimes overlapped and could fit under different themes making it difficult to have definitive themes. Focusing on these main themes also meant that careful consideration had to be given to responses which were relevant to the research question but not as prevalent so that they were not lost. Conversely, due to the limitations of the project, some interesting themes

⁵² Braun, Virginia and Clarke, Victoria, *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology*. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2) pgs 77-101 (2006) pg 79

⁵³ Ditto pg 78

were not followed through as they were not relevant to the research question.

Project Outline

Subsequent chapters chart the project demonstrating the interaction of historical, theological and cultural concepts relating to faith formation. Firstly, having an awareness of the specific context in which this project is located is essential. Thus Chapter 2 attempts to capture the nature of the Holiness Pentecostal denomination in which faith formation is being analysed. The Church of God in Christ, (COGIC) is introduced with observations of its Holiness and later Pentecostal foundations in the USA, the influence of Caribbean Christianity on Pentecostalism and COGIC's route to Britain via the Caribbean. (COGIC's Seal, Statement of Faith and main doctrines are listed under Appendices 7, 8 and 9 respectively). This then paved the way for Chapters 3, 4, and 5 to describe and critique the work of the three interlocutors: James Fowler's faith developmental theory, Thomas Groome's shared praxis approach and Anthony Reddie's Black Christian education of liberation respectively. Adding to the theoretical work was the data from a limited number of interviewees who could reflect on their experience in COGIC and could act as sources of inspiration. The results are analysed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 draws on the specific concepts that have been outlined in the previous chapters in relation to the research question and formulates a theoretical position on how faith is formed in COGIC UK. Chapter 8 concludes the projects showing that faith formation in COGIC UK is distinctive because of the combination of its Holiness roots, classical Pentecostal heritage, and Caribbean and Black British culture. It proposes a strategy for COGIC; a British Black Pentecostal pedagogy which could be intentional, effective and theologically valid.

Chapter 2- Church of God in Christ (COGIC)

*For ye, brethren, became followers of the **churches of God** which in Judaea are **in Christ** Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:*
(1 Thessalonians 2: 14 KJV)

The specific cultural context of this project is the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in the United Kingdom. Like some members of the scientific community, who limit their investigations to their own interests, I will have to declare and acknowledge mine within the research. Yet, who knows us better than we ourselves? Na'im Akbar, ('The Afrocentric Paradigm': *Papers in African Psychology*), speaking from an African psychology perspective noted that Black people have been investigated and defined by other people and therefore urged Black scientists to dedicate themselves to gain knowledge of themselves and their own condition in order to establish principles for the restitution of themselves and the amelioration of their condition.⁵⁴ Aldred, writing from a Black Caribbean perspective and using the gospel writer, Luke (1 - 4) as an example, concluded that 'the informed insider is the most reliable witness'⁵⁵ (*Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity*). On that note, and as an informed insider, I introduce you to the Church of God in Christ (COGIC).

COGIC USA

The name, Church of God in Christ (COGIC) is taken from the verse cited above, 1Thessalonians 2:14. It is recorded that its founder, Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, was seeking a scriptural name for the church. While walking the streets of Little Rock, Arkansas, he had a revelation of the name which was supported by the verse⁵⁶ (*So you want to know your Church: Another look at Catechism in the Church of God in Christ*). Its history, firstly founded in 1897 as a Holiness Church and its reconstitution

⁵⁴ Akbar Na'im 'The Afrocentric Paradigm' *Papers in African Psychology* (Florida, USA: Mind Productions) 2004 pg 33

⁵⁵ Aldred, J.D. (pg 2)

⁵⁶ Hall, Alferd Z. Jr. *So you want to know your Church: Another look at Catechism in the Church of God in Christ* (Memphis, Tennessee: Zannju) 1995 pg 10

as a Pentecostal Church in 1907 is widely documented. Donald Dayton,⁵⁷ (*Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*), traces the roots of Pentecostalism from the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification, to the Revivalist and Holiness movements. Thus COGIC's history shows some of these elements but also the influence of slave religion on its founder and other leading Pentecostals. Similarly to how Dianne Stewart,⁵⁸ (*Three Eyes for the Journey – African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience*), illustrated how the African dimensions shaped Jamaica's religious experience, Vinson Synan and Charles Fox Jr. describe how the African slave religion had much in common with a Christian world view and some of the practices were woven into Christianity. 'These included the belief in a divine spirit, signs and wonders, miracles and healings, invisible spirits, trances, spirit possession and visions and dreams'⁵⁹ (*William Seymour: Pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival*).

Charles Mason, born in 1866, one year after the abolition of slavery in the Southern States of America was a son of former slaves. Elijah Hill relates how the slaves had a history of stealing away to pray; experiencing the manifestation of the presence and power of God in their midst. He described how Mason's mother encouraged him to have a life of prayer and that from the age of seven, he would join with the older former slaves in these meetings where he too, experienced the presence of God. Not only did he receive visions and dreams but he was healed at the age of 13 of yellow fever, a disease that eventually killed his father. Mason became a member of a Baptist Church and through this personal experience he travelled widely, dedicating himself to praying for the healing of others.⁶⁰ Mason was interested in retaining some of the practices that the slaves brought into Christianity such as 'holy dances, ecstatic worship and falling out under the power of the Holy Spirit'⁶¹ (*The Triumph of the Black Church*). Thus after a six month tenure at Arkansas Baptist College in

⁵⁷ Dayton, Donald W. *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (New Jersey: Hendrickson Publishers)

⁵⁸ Stewart, Dianne *Three Eyes for the Journey*

⁵⁹ Synan, Vinson & Fox, Charles R JR. *William Seymour: Pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival* (Alachua, Florida: Bridge- Logos) 2012 pg 19

⁶⁰ Hill, Elijah L *The Triumph of the Black Church* (USA: Elijah L. Hill) 2013 pgs 16 -29

⁶¹ Ibid, pg 44

1893, he left because it could not 'assist him in his preparation to help him in achieving his lifelong task of preserving slave religion'⁶² (*The Triumph of the Black Church*). Through his travels, Mason was introduced to and embraced the teachings of the Holiness Movement.

The hallmark of the Holiness Movement was the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification/Christian perfection which emphasised a second work of grace after salvation to empower the believer to live a life of holiness. Mason was not unusual in being a member of a Baptist church but subscribing to Holiness Doctrine. According to Leonard Lovett, most of the Black Pentecostal leaders followed a Wesleyan brand of sanctification although they belonged to the Baptist Church⁶³ ('Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement' in Synan, Vinson (ed.) *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*). Chronicling the first fifty years of COGIC, Charles Pleas, writing from firsthand experience as someone who was saved under the preaching of Bishop Mason, outlined how Charles Mason and Charles Price Jones sought the Lord as members of the Baptist Church and preached sanctification but they were rejected by the Baptists. They then preached in revivalist meetings until they found an abandoned gin house in Lexington, Mississippi where they started their own movement⁶⁴ (*Fifty Years Achievement from 1906 – 1956: A period in history of The Church of God in Christ*). Clemmons observed that they were excommunicated from the Black Baptist Church for introducing their holiness views i.e. their 'zeal for Wesleyan perfectionism and their militant defence of slave worship practices the rest of the Black Church sought to forget'⁶⁵ (*Bishop C H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*).

However, it was not only the Black Church that rejected Mason and his denomination. There is evidence of a multi ethnic congregation from its inception as a Holiness church with police trying to break up

⁶² Hill, Elijah, pg 43

⁶³ Lovett, Leonard 'Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement' in Synan, Vinson (ed.) *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International) 1975 pg 140

⁶⁴ Pleas, Charles H. *Fifty Years Achievement from 1906 – 1956: A period in History of The Church of God in Christ* (Memphis: Church of God in Christ Headquarters) (reprinted 1991)

⁶⁵ Clemmons, pg 21

congregations because of the segregation rules of the Southern states in America⁶⁶ (*The Triumph of the Black Church*). In 1907, COGIC was reconstituted as a Pentecostal church after Mason visited the Azusa Street revival in California, the foundations of Pentecostalism.

Although competing claims have been made for Topeka, Kansas, many historians have now accepted Azusa Street as the birthplace of Pentecostalism. The Azusa Street revival, led by William J Seymour, who like Mason was the son of former slaves started in 1906. As a Black man, Seymour was barred from the Bible School in Topeka, Kansas where Charles Parham was the principal. However, he was allowed to listen outside the classroom through a half opened door. Seymour listened to Parham's doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. This he considered to be the third work of grace, a hallmark of classical Pentecostals (saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit). Seymour went to California preaching this message before he experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After some initial difficulties with doors closing against him, he hired an old Methodist Church at 312, Azusa Street where prayer meetings were held uninterrupted for three years, with people speaking and singing in tongues, and prophesying⁶⁷ (*The Pentecostals*). Seymour extended Parham's doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by tongues to a reconciling Pentecostalism where there was an interracial, cross cultural mixture of people at Azusa Street at a time when there were segregation laws in the United States of America. People travelled from across America and overseas to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and to take the message back to their local congregations. Furthermore, the layout of the church meant that everyone was a potential contributor as all seats were at the same level and there was no raised platform. In addition, Seymour introduced cultural practices and the spirituals of Black people into his liturgy at a time when they were criticised as inferior and not fit for Christian music⁶⁸ (*Pentecostalism*:

⁶⁶ Hill, Elijah pg 51

⁶⁷ Hollenweger, Walter J *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM Press Ltd) 1972 pg 22

⁶⁸ Hollenweger, Walter J *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc) 2005 pg 20

Origins and Developments Worldwide). Kenneth J Archer noted that African slave spirituality and worship helped to shape the experiential experiences of Pentecostalism⁶⁹ (*A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community*). Mason was greatly influenced by his experience at Azusa Street.

Mason accepted the doctrine of Pentecostalism, expounded by William J Seymour and spoke in tongues and was filled by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mason's personal experience of divine healing and slave religion had paved the way for the later Pentecostal encounter. Synan and Fox reported that some scholars believe that African religion influenced William Seymour's brand of Pentecostalism and in turn Mason's. Synan and Fox claim that both Mason and Seymour had been friends before but that this encounter led to a lifelong friendship⁷⁰ (*William Seymour: Pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival*). Pentecostalism, as expounded by Seymour and Mason with its emphasis on the personal inner transformation of the believer, was a movement with far reaching effects. Jack Hayford posited that 'What God did through Luther in recovering the message of salvation and did through Wesley in recovering the message of holy life and service, He did through the early Pentecostal revival in recovering the dynamism of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church'⁷¹ 'Introduction' in Duffield Guy P and Van Cleave, Nathaniel *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*.

Furthermore, Mason, saw the interracial congregation at Azusa Street and felt that it was confirmation that it was God's will for him to have a multicultural church⁷² (*The Triumph of the Black Church*). However as racism surfaced, coupled with Mason's insistence on keeping aspects of slave culture, many of the whites departed. Allan Anderson also recorded that COGIC had a number of white ministers and members until the

⁶⁹ Archer, Kenneth J *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press) pg 14

⁷⁰ Synan & Fox pg 51

⁷¹ Hayford, Jack 'Introduction' in Duffield Guy P and Van Cleave, Nathaniel. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles, California: Four Square Media)1983 (pg vii)

⁷² Hill, Elijah, pg 65

Assemblies of God was formed in 1914⁷³ (*An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*). The Assemblies of God (USA) evolved out of COGIC and it is recorded that Bishop Mason attended their inauguration service as a guest speaker and gave them his blessings⁷⁴ (*Bishop C H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*). Anderson noted that because COGIC was a registered Church, Mason issued credentials to Pentecostals all across America, including many of the white ministers in the Assemblies of God⁷⁵ (*An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*). In America today, COGIC consists mainly of African Americans. Mason's biographer explained that 'not only did the church contradict the identities and visions of the European world view, it presented to the masses of disenfranchised Blacks an identity and vision based upon the despised slave-circle culture of the Black slaves'⁷⁶ (*Bishop C H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*). The slave circle or the ring shout, originally thought to be part of an African dance, happened during the main service or during prayer meeting; men and women would gather in a circle and move in a counter clockwise direction shuffling their feet, clapping and spontaneously singing and praying aloud. Mason believed that Blacks would lose the power of their religious experience if they tried emulating whites in order to be accepted and assimilated into the American mainstream. He believed that the church would lose its identity and vision by blending with the surrounding society⁷⁷ (*Bishop C H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*).

Black Pentecostal Theology

Anderson observed that there are many forms of Pentecostalism but they all have one experience in common; 'a personal encounter with the Spirit of God enabling and empowering people for service'⁷⁸ (*An Introduction to*

⁷³ Anderson, Allan *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 2004 pg 52

⁷⁴ Clemmons, pg 54

⁷⁵ Anderson, pg 52

⁷⁶ Clemmons, pg 22

⁷⁷ Clemmons, pg 22

⁷⁸ Anderson, pg 187

Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity). He later outlined how the Spirit is involved in each area of both individual and community life so that theology is acted out in the rituals, liturgies and daily lives of people.⁷⁹ Similarly Keith Warrington posits that ‘Pentecostals (traditionally) do not think theologically so much as live out their theology practically’⁸⁰ (*Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*). However, other theologians have pointed out that Pentecostal epistemology is rooted in its affective narrative theology⁸¹ (*Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*). Walter Hollenweger also highlighted its Black roots which include amongst other aspects ‘orality of liturgy, narrative of theology and witness, inclusion of dreams and visions in personal and public forms of worship; these function as a kind of icon for the individual and the community’⁸² (*Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*). Thus, rooted in the oral tradition of Black slaves, Pentecostal epistemology is different from Western epistemology but nevertheless, a knowledge form in its own right. This is combined with a biblical view of knowledge as something that engages the heart, mind and body and lived out in obedience to the known will of God. Cheryl Bridges Johns explains that ‘a Pentecostal epistemology understands the knowledge of God to be experiential and relational’⁸³ (*Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*).

Founded on a Pentecostal epistemology, the following description of COGIC by Alferd Z. Hall reflects COGIC’s theological position: ‘THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST is a church of the Lord Jesus Christ in which the Word of God is preached, ordinances are administered and the doctrine of sanctification, or holiness, is emphasized as being essential to the salvation of mankind (humankind). Our church is commonly known as

⁷⁹ Anderson, pg 197

⁸⁰ Warrington, Keith *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T&T Clark)2008 pg 16

⁸¹Smith, James K. A. *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 2010 pg 12

⁸² Hollenweger, Walter J. *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (USA: Hendrickson Publishers) 2005 (soft bound) pg 18

⁸³ Bridges John, Cheryl *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock) 2010 pg 40

being Holiness or Pentecostal in nature because of the importance ascribed in the events which occurred on the Day of Pentecost, the 50th day after the Passover, or Easter, as being necessary for all believers in Christ Jesus to experience'⁸⁴ (*So you want to know your Church: Another look at Catechism in the Church of God in Christ*). (See Appendices 8 and 9 for The Statement of Faith and main doctrines). This statement along with the main doctrines indicate that COGIC subscribes to the Pentecostal full gospel message described by Dayton,⁸⁵ (*Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*), as a constellation of themes; salvation, healing, holiness/sanctification, baptism of the Spirit, the second coming of Jesus. Dayton also outlined how the 'latter rain' motif was central to Pentecostal thought. Using the pattern of the rainfall in Palestine (the early rain to accompany planting and the latter rain in the autumn to ripen the crops for harvest), Pentecostals viewed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost as the early rain to plant the church and Pentecostalism as the latter rain to restore the gifts to the church ⁸⁶ (*Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*). The seal of COGIC (Appendix 7) has been designed with the latter rain motif as its background). However, where COGIC differed from other Pentecostals was that as a Black Church, this balance of Christology and Pneumatology (identified by Clemmons) was manifested through the combined principles of holiness, spiritual encounter/empowerment and prophetic social consciousness. Clemmons proposed that these principles, established by the founding fathers distinguished COGIC's hermeneutics from those of white Pentecostals. He cited an unpublished PhD thesis, which noted that all three elements were needed to make it work; holiness on its own could lead to escapism, prophetic social consciousness could lead to anarchy or legalism and spiritual empowerment could lead to obsession with power⁸⁷ (*Bishop C H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*).

⁸⁴ Hall, pg 8

⁸⁵ Dayton, pgs 21 -22

⁸⁶ Dayton, pg 27

⁸⁷ Clemmons, pg 58

Thus, it could be argued that Bishop Mason and the leadership of COGIC were ahead of their time in introducing an African centred hermeneutics to reading the Bible. Clemmons observed that, 'based on Black slave tradition and the reading of Scripture from the perspective of poor Black people, the Church of God in Christ offered a radical alternative to the majority culture'⁸⁸ (*Bishop C H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*). Although not using the term liberation theology, Mason was interested in the liberation of people of all races. 'He taught that a tongue without the practice of breaking down barriers of malice, hatred and prejudice was not true Christianity'⁸⁹ (*The Triumph of the Black Church*). Consequently, Mason was instrumental not only in defying the segregation laws through mixed racial gatherings but in fighting for freedom of religion during World War 1 so that it is claimed that 'the Pre-Civil Rights movement had already begun through civil liberties through Bishop Charles H. Mason'⁹⁰ (*The Triumph of the Black Church*). This message is still being reiterated in COGIC as a contemporary COGIC minister, Leonard Lovett has written, 'Black Pentecostalism affirms with dogmatic insistence that liberation is always the consequence of the spirit... authentic Pentecostal encounter does not occur without liberation'⁹¹ (*Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement*' in Synan, Vinson (ed.) *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*).

During the 1960s, the leaders of COGIC along with those from other churches were actively involved in The Civil Rights Movement. In November 2012, I listened to the present International Presiding Bishop describing his experiences in one of those marches. It was from the headquarters of COGIC, Mason's Temple in Memphis, Tennessee that Martin Luther King delivered his famous 'Mountain Top Speech' on 3rd April 1968, the day before his assassination. Today, COGIC is still very active in mobilising the Black vote in America. It was during the International Convention in St Louis in November 2012 that the question

⁸⁸ Clemmons, pg 22

⁸⁹ Hill, Elijah pg 70

⁹⁰ Hill, Elijah, pg 117

⁹¹ Lovett, pg 70

was posed as to whether education is the new civil rights agenda as Church ministers demonstrated their support in fighting for the right of Black children in America to be given access to a good education.

When listening to and reading COGIC pamphlets about the leaders within COGIC USA, it appears that people are quite proud of their heritage with claims of being 3rd and 4th generation COGIC.⁹² I also observed that the current Bishops were the sons of former Bishops. It is possible to be cynical and see this as a form of nepotism although there is an election process which should prevent the formation of a powerful dynasty. Nevertheless, the church is not exempt from mirroring the 'political' wrangling of society. However, it does indicate that there is a tradition of passing on the faith to succeeding generations even if it is among the clergy. It is not within the scope of this project but it is probably worth investigating what percentage of the laity has joined the Church through external evangelism or through internal growth. This would indicate the extent to which the Church is attracting the wider community to share in and become part of its faith tradition or whether faith is being passed on through families. At this point, there does not appear to be much literature referring to faith formation directly within COGIC but as one of the largest Pentecostal churches in the world with over 6 million members worldwide, and operating in over fifty countries, one can assume that faith is being formed.

Agencies for Children and Young People within COGIC USA

If one accepts a definition of faith formation as a 'person's progression in faith (a gift from God) towards God with Jesus as their role model',⁹³ (Being and Becoming: Adolescence' in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*), it is possible to see that without explicitly identifying it, the agencies of the church are expected to play a leading role in faith formation. Whilst there is no official manual on faith formation, there is an emphasis on growth in faith through the agencies of the church. In America, the agencies of the Church are: the Sunday

⁹² International COGIC Convention pamphlets 2012

⁹³ Bryan, pg 140

School, Sunshine Band, Purity Class and The Youth Department which takes a leading role on Young Women of Excellence and Young Men of Excellence programmes. It is interesting to note that the Women's Department supervises the following auxiliaries; The Prayer and Bible Band, The Young Women's Christian Council, Purity Class, Sunshine Band⁹⁴ (*Official Manual-COGIC*).

The manual of COGIC states 'There shall be a Sunday School Department for training and enlightening children and adults in spiritual understanding in the doctrines of the Church of God in Christ'⁹⁵ (*Official Manual-COGIC*). It then outlines the administration and chain of accountability within the department. It is clear from this that the purpose of Sunday School is to teach the doctrines of the church but it appears to be left to the individual churches to translate this into practice. The first Sunday School was started in 1908 and grew rapidly with organisation at local, jurisdictional, national and international level. In 1968 the publishing house was started for the printing of Sunday School materials (Power for Living). Without access to written records, it is not possible to ascertain exactly Bishop Mason's perception of doctrinal teaching. It is not clear whether he believed that the teaching of doctrine was not enough on its own for children or whether he wanted to start an additional group that met during the week as Sunday School was only on a Sunday morning. It is also possible that the Sunday School was following the Schooling/Instructional paradigm which was so popular in Sunday School teaching in America at the time and he wanted more practical sessions for children. Whatever, the reason, soon after starting the Sunday School, he established another organisation for children.

Whereas the Sunday School is a department in its own right, the Sunshine Band is an auxiliary of the Women's Department. It was organised by the founder, Bishop Mason in 1911 for children under the age of 12. Sunday School could be taught by any gender so placing the Sunshine Band within the Women's Department is significant as this implies the need for a

⁹⁴ Church of God in Christ – *Official Manual* (1973) (Memphis: Church of God in Christ Headquarters) pg 21

⁹⁵ Church of God in Christ – *Official Manual* pg 22

nurturing role as supported by the following statement. 'This auxiliary focuses on the ministry to and nurturance of our children as they are passing through so many mental, physical, emotional, social and spiritual changes and moving towards adolescence'.⁹⁶ (*The Sunshine Band Official Curriculum Guide*) The primary concern 'is reaching and saving our children by introducing them to Christ and what it means to be Christ-like during these tender years. There is no investment that is too great to provide a Biblical foundation for our children. We teach the children about the true meaning of God, the Love of God and His Son Jesus, basic Bible concepts and knowledge, worship and service through Bible Study, Music, Drama, Arts and Crafts, Worship Services, Special programs and field Trips'⁹⁷ (*The Sunshine Band Official Curriculum Guide*).

The Sunshine Band is divided into different age groups; Sunbeams from ages 1-5, Sunrays from 6-8 and Illuminators 9 -12. The Curriculum Guide outlines the physical, mental, emotional and social growth and gives goals for each age group. The Curriculum Guide is divided into the following subheadings; the Sunshine Band, the Role of the Leader, Ministering to Children, the Curriculum: what every 'Sunshiner' should know, and information on the Church of God in Christ. The Preface gives a rationale as to why the book was written; 'This Curriculum Guide came about as result of our mutual concerns that too many of our Sunshine Bands are acting independently and that we are not all teaching the same things. As a result of two workshops with Sunshine bands across the country, a basic curriculum was outlined and endorsed as basic to the growth and maturation of our children and their ability to become involved and committed to Christ and the Church'⁹⁸ (*The Sunshine Band Official Curriculum Guide*). However, there was also room for flexibility as leaders were encouraged to submit material to the committee for review and possible inclusion in the next edition. Thus, although the curriculum was not organised directly from the Headquarters, a group of leaders, noticing

⁹⁶ Howard, Dr. Lytia R *The Sunshine Band Official Curriculum Guide* (Atlanta Georgia: Sunshine band Publications) 1996, pg 2

⁹⁷ Howard, pg 2

⁹⁸ Howard, preface

the need for coordination and guidance, managed to implement it. As the 'Sunshiners' grew older, another organisation was formed.

Founded in 1926 as an offshoot of the Sunshine Band and catering for teens between the ages of 13–18, The Church of God in Christ charts the history of the Purity Class on its website. It notes that during the 'moral decay' of the 1920s, one lady, Mother Enora C J Johnson of Michigan had a vision to create an organisation with the aim of preserving a high moral standard in Christian youth. By 1950, it had become a national auxiliary under the auspices of the Women's Department. Again, this indicates that the women were seen as having a nurturing role in the lives of the teenagers. Acknowledging that the age group for which it caters is one where individuals are struggling to form their identity, there is still an expectation of high moral standards as the same set of rules applies to both the young and the old. Therefore, 'the Purity Class is unique and unlike any other organization of its kind in that, it not only teaches youth how to be pure, chaste, and holy in the home, school, neighbourhood and church; but it offers a full activity and involvement program that discourages the need in Christian youth for the companionship of the world'.⁹⁹

In addition to programmes undertaken by the Women's Department for children and young people, there is also a Youth Department. The manual of COGIC states 'There shall be a Young People's Department which shall be called the Young People's Willing Workers'¹⁰⁰ (*Official Manual-COGIC*). Unlike the Sunday School, it does not describe its purpose. It delineates the administration and chain of command. While the women lead the Purity Class, this is a department in itself and it is not clear how different this is from the Purity Class. More recently, the Department has developed programmes for youth called the Young Women of Excellence and the Young Men of Valour.

Within COGIC USA, it would appear that there is a structure almost like rites of passages for children and young people. In addition to activities

⁹⁹ <http://www.cogic.org/purityclass/our-history/>

¹⁰⁰ Church of God in Christ – Official Manual pg 23

run by the Sunday School and Youth departments, The Women's Department oversees the Sunshine Band, Purity Class and Young Women's Christian Council. From the Purity Class the women progress to the Young Women's Christian Council for women up to the age of 39. During this time, many young women are developing ministries as Evangelists, Missionaries and those associated with women. Although not extending the age group, more recently, the head of the International Women's Department, (the Women's Supervisor) expressed her concerns for those from 40-49 and there are now special sessions at the International Women's Conventions for this group. Whether there will be another specialised group for this age eventually remains to be seen. After the Purity Class, the men proceed to areas of ministry; deacons, ministers, elders, pastors. It is possible then that from their earliest days, children in COGIC USA will recognise that there is progression for them through the Episcopal system of the church and those who attend the International Annual Holy Convocation will participate in activities for their groups while others still may be able to view clippings and see the status accorded to their groups. Not only will they have heard through the teaching but they will have noticed the different roles that men and women perform with only male elders, pastors and bishops. Women are still in positions of leadership but in different roles. In fact, the Women's Department is considered to be very important and the church mother (head of the women's department in a local church) 'is to a pastor in the local church, what a wife is to her husband in the home'¹⁰¹ (*Handbook for the Department of Women COGIC*). She works very closely with the pastor as she oversees the auxiliaries mentioned overleaf in her local church. As children and young people progress in their faith towards God, although they will still be expected to live a life of holiness, the socialisation process of the church will therefore impact the way they live out their faith in terms of the interaction of gender and role identity in ministry. The way they have been socialised will mean that children and young people will expect to carry out different functions within the church. Some may accept this as

¹⁰¹ Church of God in Christ Inc *Handbook for the Department of Women* (Memphis, Tennessee: Church of God in Christ Publishing House) reprinted 1994 pg 21

part of the COGIC way; others may question it as they face the tensions (put forward by Fowler and described in chapter 3) of the gender roles. Some may decide to leave and find a church where gender is not such an issue or others may continue in the church for other positive reasons. Whilst one can be critical about socialising into gender roles, there is no doubt that there is a structure with COGIC USA for children and young people that will enable them to grow in faith. I shall now turn to the UK scene.

COGIC UK

Like, its American counterpart, COGIC UK can be described as a Black Church because its membership is predominantly Black; these are people of the African Diaspora who have their roots in the Caribbean. Although Africans in America and the Caribbean had a similar experience of slavery, there were also some differences during the period of slavery and after its abolition because of the contexts in which they lived. This affected the way Christianity was practised in the Caribbean and the priorities with which they engaged. Therefore, while having the same doctrines as its headquarters church, it is expected that a COGIC denomination founded in England by Caribbean people will operate differently in some respects from the original church. Reference has already been made to Stewart,¹⁰² (*Three Eyes for the Journey – African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience*), who demonstrated how the African dimensions shaped Jamaica's religious experience. Aldred traced the history of Caribbean people showing the milieu from which they came. He identified 4 main groups of people in the Caribbean. He noted that although 90% of the indigenous people of Caribs and Arawaks were mainly annihilated by the presence of Europeans between 1492 (when Columbus first arrived) and 1570, a small proportion survived. Secondly, a number of Europeans settlers including some poor Whites also remained. Thirdly, by the time 400 years of slavery had ended, people of African descent became the most numerous group in the Caribbean. Fourthly, after the abolition of slavery, indentured servants from Asia settled in different numbers on

¹⁰² Stewart, pg 83

various Caribbean islands¹⁰³ (*Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity*). He pointed out that all groups have brought their expressions of faith into the melting pot so that 'faiths, including the dominant Christianity, that have emerged have been shaped from the beliefs and practices of the original Indian people, Europeans, Africans and Asians as well as developing some expressions that are the product of the Caribbean. It is reasonable to assume eclecticism and syncretism in these developments'¹⁰⁴ (*Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity*). Thus, while Africans are seen to be the dominant group and Christianity the main religion, while adhering to denominational doctrine, the influence and focus of COGIC in the Caribbean is likely to be different from the mother Church in America. Faith formation could therefore be different.

The experiences of some Black Caribbean immigrants who faced rejection on visiting churches in the United Kingdom in the 1950s have been well documented and also handed down orally. Despite their experiences, some remained faithful to the established churches. However, others started churches as extensions of their previous denominations in the Caribbean and linked them to their American headquarters. Nevertheless, rejection by the host community was not the only factor leading to the development of these churches. Aldred cites a number of people from different denominations who started or attended churches because they wanted to be with the people of the same denomination or colour. He posits that 'we can reasonably state that the Black Church in Britain is not the illegitimate child of rejection but of the will of God'¹⁰⁵ (*Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity*). Aldred notes three traits of the Black Church movement. He asserts that it is denominational rather than non-denominational and is usually associated with a larger international body; it is ethnically defined in that most of its members are from the Caribbean or some other Black or minority ethnic group and it is self impelling in response to missionary and evangelistic needs rather than

¹⁰³ Aldred, pgs 38 -49

¹⁰⁴ Aldred pg 67

¹⁰⁵ Aldred, pg 90

being driven by outside factors or interests ¹⁰⁶ (*Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity*). Sturge,¹⁰⁷ (*Look What the Lord has Done! An exploration of Black Christian Faith in Britain*), also cites Joel Edwards who notes that the churches also came into being to fulfil spiritual, social and cultural needs. (This can be compared to the pivotal role of COGIC USA in catering for the needs of disenfranchised Black people).

COGIC is one such church, typical of what Aldred has described. The UK branch of COGIC was started by Bishop Oswald and Mother Mary McLachlan in a house in Hackney in 1948. Discussion with the daughter of the founders indicated that her mother, who was at the forefront of the movement, did not suffer racism as such. On first arriving in London, she attended either the Assemblies of God or Elim Pentecostal on Sunday mornings. Her daughter attributed her mother's acceptance in these churches to the fact that she was 'high brown'. Her mother, knowing that others were told not to return to churches they had visited, started meetings in her home on Sunday evenings and also held a midweek prayer meeting. In 1952, Bishop Mason formally received the UK church into fellowship. Consequently, it takes its date from that time.

There is little written literature on COGIC UK. One book by Norma Thomas-Juggan,¹⁰⁸ (*Story of the Calvary Church of God in Christ: History, Organisational Structure and Doctrine*) has attempted to give the history of how individual churches started. George Powell,¹⁰⁹ (*The Glorious Past of the Church of God in Christ: The Humble Beginnings of the Church of God in Christ*), has written a pamphlet about the origins of the church in Brockley. In his autobiography, Alton Latouche,¹¹⁰ (*Natural Ability: An Account of one Man's Journey through Life*), has described certain facts about the church but as yet, there is no analysis of its history and contribution to the British Pentecostal scene. Therefore, I write as an

¹⁰⁶ Aldred, pgs 90 -91

¹⁰⁷ Sturge, pg 87

¹⁰⁸ Thomas-Juggan, Norma *Story of the Calvary Church of God in Christ: History, Organisational Structure and Doctrine* (Enfield, Middlesex: Norma Thomas-Juggan) 1998

¹⁰⁹ Powell, George *The Glorious Past of the Church of God in Christ (The Humble Beginnings of the Church of God in Christ)* Copyright ©Church of God in Christ (COGIC)& G. W. Powell 2008

¹¹⁰ La Touche, Reverend A. G. *Natural Ability : An account of one Man's Journey through Life* (London: Minerva Press) 1998

informed observer about the UK scene. It appears that while COGIC USA continued to emphasise inner transformation but was changing in its attitude to outward forms of holiness in terms of dress code, COGIC UK developed with its mixture of Pentecostalism and the legacy of holiness traditions brought from the Caribbean which it tried to inculcate in believers in a hostile and strange land. There was no doubt that COGIC, along with Pentecostal churches started by Caribbean people initially offered a refuge from the racism that many people experienced in their every day experiences. Today, it has over 20 branches in the UK.

Agencies for Children and Young People within COGIC UK

Like its counterpart in the USA, there is nothing written on faith formation, but again the agencies of the church are expected to lead the way. The following is a reflection from over 40 years within COGIC. Unlike its American counterpart, agencies like the Sunshine Band, Purity Class and Young Women's Christian Council have not been established. There have been occasions when children have dressed in the colours of the Sunshine Band and sang as a junior choir but there is no formal organisational structure. Churches in Britain have developed Sunday School Departments, Young People's Departments and Bible Study Classes.

Within COGIC UK, there is a notion that the Sunday School is the 'nursery' of the Church. Following the model handed down by our founders, it is a time for teaching all ages. Consequently, there are Sunday School classes for both children and adults. During the 1960s and 1970s the Sunday School expanded as children of immigrants either were born in Britain or brought over from the Caribbean. Minibuses collected children from home and returned them unless parents were going to join them later at church.

In the UK, there is no curriculum. Although quarterly materials are published by the International Church which gives guidelines on lessons, there is no printed philosophy or background which would suggest that there is a curriculum. Neither the website nor the printed materials indicate

that there is one. The Quarterly materials are often criticized for being too old fashioned and too American for the UK church. Consequently, it is left to the Superintendent of each church or even to the individual teacher to decide content and materials. Usually, children are divided into classes according to their age group but occasionally, through lack of teachers or other factors, there have been classes in some church with a wide age range from about 3–10. With issues of space, especially where churches are renting accommodation, classes would be divided across one main hall, so that it is possible to be distracted by events in other classes. Furthermore, it limits the scope of activities that any one class can do. Sunday School takes place before the main meeting and not during it, like other churches so that children can be part of the worship service where they can learn from and participate jointly with the adults.

In our branch of COGIC UK, the highlight was our annual Sunday School Anniversary where we practised plays, poems and songs for the grand occasion. At a time when the West Indian Child was made educational subnormal in British schools,¹¹¹ (*How the West Indian Child is made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System: The Scandal of the Black Child in Schools in Britain*), the Sunday School provided a platform for developing self confidence in children. Here they were taught to recite, project their voices, go on stage and perform before an audience to sing, recite or play instruments. It also provided friendship groups as a cushion to repressive experiences in schools. Sometimes, there were the Saturday evening trips to visit another Sunday School Anniversary (expanding horizons as new places were visited) and then there was the annual outing to the Seaside. These experiences could be compared to those of the Sunday School Movement in Britain. Stephen Orchard notes ‘until their collapse Sunday schools provided the means and motivation for children to develop aptitude in debate and the performing arts. No modern government programme could possibly mobilise so many opportunities for

¹¹¹ Coard, Bernard *How the West Indian Child is made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System: The Scandal of the Black Child in Schools in Britain*. (London: new Beacon for the Caribbean education Community Workers’ Association) 1971

children to act, sing, or speak'¹¹² ('Sunday Schools: Some Reflections 'in Orchard, Stephen and Briggs H Y *The Sunday School Movement: Studies in the Growth and Decline of Sunday Schools*).

Initially, methods were reminiscent of the school system in the Caribbean; i.e. very formal and based on rote learning. Sunday School teaching consisted of teaching children a Bible verse, known as the 'Golden text'. Children were often heard reciting 'our golden text is taken from (book of the Bible), chapter ...verse.., followed by the actual words. In some cases, a story might be told around the verse or an explanation or personal application. Children from about seven or eight would have a story but would still be expected to learn the golden text. Children who were older might have lessons from publications such as 'Go Teach'. The delivery method was questions and answers and understanding was measured through factual recall.

However, from those who had come through the Sunday School, educated in the British system and possibly trained as teachers, new methods were introduced; e.g. role play, drawing, writing, discussion. Schemes of work from other publications such as 'Scripture Union' and 'Scripture Press', were introduced. The focus was on the 'how' of doing Sunday School and not so much on the task.

Despite, the lack of a curriculum and with limited human and financial resources, the National Sunday School Department tried to bring a more holistic approach by formulating a development plan; the present one has been in operation since 2009 (Appendix 10) and is in the process of being reviewed. With the influence of this writer, there is reference to faith formation, but it is not a term that is generally used outside of the department. There is an annual rota for visiting the Sunday Schools in the country, regular meetings with the local Sunday School superintendents, an annual training day for teachers on aspects of pedagogy and safeguarding, a National Sunday School day for children where children

¹¹² Orchard, Stephen and Briggs, John H.Y 'Sunday Schools: Some Reflections 'in Orchard, Stephen and Briggs H. Y *The Sunday School Movement: Studies in the Growth and Decline of Sunday Schools* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock) 2007 pg xvii

from all over the country meet to participate in a range of activities and a Sunday School camp for children for a week in the summer holidays. Some churches also have an annual programme for children during the summer holidays.

In addition to Sunday School, there are also planned activities for young people as they approach adolescence. The National Youth Department also has documented its approach in working with Young people (Appendix 11) with its Vision Statement, aims, objectives and strategies to implement these. There is an annual Youth day, annual Youth Convention over the Spring Bank holiday weekend where children are also included, a national children's choir which usually sings in the Youth Conventions, a national youth choir, a yearly leadership conference on aspects of youth work which now includes aspiring youth leaders. Thus children and young people are supported both in their local churches and nationally. From an early age, they are given opportunities to have fellowship with children and young people across the whole of COGIC and to participate in national events.

My experience of the local youth meeting was that it was seen as the training ground for future ministry. While there were activities such as Bible quizzes and games, young people would be expected to give a short exposition of the 'Word' with little notification. The idea was that it was a practice session in front of peers for Sundays when anyone could be called at a moment's notice to do something similar in a larger congregation. In our church, one Sunday per month was given over to the youth to lead and that was the time to demonstrate to the elders 'how you were growing in the Lord'.

Growth in connecting with God is emphasised through prayer, the manifestation of the outward and inward forms of holiness, a changed life and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal emphasis on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer appears to be reserved for older youths and adults. In a church where members are encouraged to participate in the worship service in leading the service,

praying aloud, etc, growth appears to be measured by public performance; how well people can give a personal testimony or give (exhortations) mini sermons. Young people can sometimes feel aggrieved if they are not 'used' rather than how well they are developing in their relationship with God. Yet, despite many of them voting with their feet as soon as they can, some remain and progress through the Sunday School and Youth Departments and into ministry positions within the church.

Summary

While there are similarities in basic beliefs and doctrines between COGIC USA and UK, there are differences in operations. COGIC UK does not have the different agencies that would allow a 'rites of passage' for young people. While COGIC USA has been engaged in politics through the Civil Rights movement and issues affecting Black people, there has been reluctance for COGIC UK to do the same. Perhaps the issue of having to put down roots in a strange land had engaged the older generation more than fighting for justice and it is possible that a younger generation might address this.

Without a formal curriculum for children and young people either through the Sunday School or Youth Department, how then is faith formed? How is it that many of the people within COGIC UK have been in the church from the time that there were very young and are now in positions of leadership today? What are the factors that lead to faith formation within this church? Previous research that I conducted for the Ministerial Focussed Study (MFS) aspect of this course showed that pastors planned for the growth of their congregation through the weekly prayer meetings, fasting, evangelism, Bible Study, Sunday school and teaching on specific topics. It is hoped that this study will reveal how faith is formed within COGIC.

Chapter 3 - James Fowler: Faith Development Theory

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

(Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV)

Bearing in mind that COGIC has not articulated how faith is formed in children and young people within the denomination, the faith development theory of James Fowler,¹¹³ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*), is worthy of consideration as it has influenced much of the thinking and practice in Christian education. Fowler explained that his faith development theory originated in a context of praxis. It evolved out of his role as a 'counsellor' working at a centre for personal and vocational self-examination and growth for clergy and laity while he was writing his theological dissertation on Richard Niebuhr,¹¹⁴ (*Christ and Culture*), known for his work on Christ and culture and also the structure of faith. During his time at the centre, he was able to listen to the life story of hundreds of people while providing them with support and challenge for developmental and spiritual growth. He also taught Erik Erikson's,¹¹⁵ (*Childhood and Society*), eight stages of man at the centre and made the link between Niebuhr's conception of faith and Erikson's psychosocial conception of self. Returning to Harvard Divinity School he developed a course from his post dissertation work with Erikson, Jean Piaget,¹¹⁶ (*The Principles of Genetic Epistemology*), (cognitive development) and Lawrence Kohlberg,¹¹⁷ (*The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice*), (moral development). Fowler later moved to Emory University's Candler School of Theology to continue his work. Students were involved in conducting

¹¹³ Fowler, James W *Stages of Faith*

¹¹⁴ Niebuhr, H Richard *Christ and Culture* (London: Faber) 1952

¹¹⁵ Erikson, Erik *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton) 1950

¹¹⁶ Piaget, Jean *The Principles of Genetic Epistemology* (translated from the French by Wolfe Mays) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul) 1972

¹¹⁷ Kohlberg, Lawrence *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (San Francisco: Harper and Row) 1981

and analysing interviews which led to his faith development theory¹¹⁸ (*Faith Development Theory and the Postmodern Challenges*).

Proponents of Faith Developmental theory tend to adopt a cognitive structural approach to show how faith is formed and changed over the lifespan. Like developmental psychologists, who specialise in child development, there is an assumption that:

- There are defined dimensions of child development;
- Development is orderly;
- The results of different stages of development lead to a more efficient way of functioning; and
- There are interactions between children and the context in which they grow up which will influence their development.¹¹⁹ (*Children, Development and Ecology*' in Aldgate Jane, David Jones, Wendy Rose and Carole Jeffrey (eds.) *The Developing World of the Child*)

Fowler, like many people before him, attempts to address the questions about the need for humans to require meaning, purpose and priorities and the desire to have a grasp on the big picture. He therefore justifies his application of stage theories of human development by claiming that they 'present to us the characteristic patterns of knowing, reasoning and adapting in ways that describe general features of human growth, applicable to all of us, despite the vast differences we recognise in our temperament, our unique experiences and the contents and details of our particular life stories'¹²⁰ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). In acknowledging his reliance on the human development theories of Erikson, Piaget and Kohlberg, it is apparent that faith 'as a way of knowing',¹²¹ is based on logical ways of knowing and his cognitive structural approach is evident in the description

¹¹⁸ Fowler, James W *Faith Development Theory and the Postmodern Challenges* The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 11(3),159 – 172 2001 pp 159 -161

¹¹⁹ Aldgate, Jane 'Children, Development and Ecology' in Aldgate Jane, David Jones, Wendy Rose and Carole Jeffrey (eds.) *The Developing World of the Child* , (London: Jessica Kingsley) 2006 pg 20

¹²⁰ Fowler, pg 90

¹²¹ Fowler, pg 92

of the patterns, structures or processes he outlines. The seven operational aspects of faith knowing which Fowler has outlined are form of logic, perspective taking, form of moral judgement, social awareness, relation to authority, form of world coherence and symbolic function¹²² (*Faith Development Theory and the Postmodern Challenges*). The model is seen as vertical with a progression from lower to higher levels. However, before critiquing Fowler's model, it is necessary to describe his concept of faith and his stages of faith development.

Fowler's Definition of Faith and his Stages

In stating that he was offering a theory in the growth of faith,¹²³ (*Faith Development Theory and the Postmodern Challenges*), Fowler refers to the influence of Paul Tillich,¹²⁴ (*Systematic Theology: Combined Volume*) and Richard Niebuhr (both theologians writing in the 1950s) who describe faith as a universal human concern. Fowler acknowledged that Tillich's legacy was the notion that the values which have centre stage in our lives are directed towards the object of our ultimate concern.¹²⁵ The centre of these values could be in our ego or any form of its extension such as work, prestige and recognition, power and influence, or wealth. Consequently, one's ultimate concern could be invested in family, university, nation or church. From Fowler's perspective, Niebuhr contributed the following ideas: faith is formed through the earliest relationships with our primary caregivers; through our experience of trust and fidelity and of mistrust and betrayal. It can be seen in the shared visions and values that hold human groups together and it is a quest to trust in a transcendent centre of value and power that is worthy to give our lives unity and meaning¹²⁶ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). Fowler also acknowledges his indebtedness to his former tutor, Wilfred Cantwell Smith,¹²⁷ (*Faith and*

¹²² Fowler, Faith Development Theory pg 161

¹²³ Fowler, pg xiii

¹²⁴ Tillich, Paul *Systematic Theology: Combined Volume* (Welwyn, Herts.: James Nesbit & Co. Ltd.) 1968

¹²⁵ Tillich, pg 191

¹²⁶ Fowler, pgs 4 - 5

¹²⁷ Smith, Wilfred Cantwell *Faith and Belief* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press) 1979

Belief), who made a distinction between faith, religion and belief. Smith, a linguist studied a number of religions in the language of their primary sources and made the following conclusions. Faith and religion have a reciprocal relationship in that faith is nourished and in some sense structured by religion but yet transcends it and in turn sustains it. While faith is related to trust in the transcendent, religion is the cumulative traditions through which faith is expressed in varied forms; belief refers to the holding of ideas¹²⁸ (*Systematic Theology: Combined Volume*).

From the influences of these researchers, Fowler proposed that the content or context of faith is not always religious but that it is a person's or group's way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to their lives. For the individual, it is about seeing him or herself in relation to others who share similar meaning and purpose¹²⁹ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). Faith is seen as relational, triadic or covenantal in shape and an individual can be part of different relational triads in each of the different roles and institutions in which they may be a part. Based on the Latin and Greek words which portray the idea of actively pledging allegiance, trusting, committing, and resting one's heart upon, Fowler describes faith as a verb. Faith is therefore relational as there is always another involved e.g. I trust in and I am loyal to... He considers it to be a dynamic of becoming, awakening or realisation¹³⁰ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). Consequently, it is expected that there will be a change over the lifespan.

Fowler recognises that faith is universal, 'yet so infinitely varied that each person's faith is unique'¹³¹ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). Whilst acknowledging the uniqueness of the faith of the individual, the model is seen as having universal application without recourse to the impact of ethnicity, cultures, worldviews, belief or systems. Fowler's research is based on interviews,

¹²⁸ Tillich, pgs 4 -13

¹²⁹ Fowler, pg 4

¹³⁰ Fowler pg 18

¹³¹ Fowler, pg Xiii

(some of them in-depth conversations) with three hundred and fifty-nine people from the age of nearly four to eighty-four. The interviews included men, women and children from a variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds: Jews, Catholics, Protestants, agnostics and atheists. It was noted however, that 97% of the interviewees were white. Fowler reported: 'In sum, the sample is overwhelmingly white, largely Christian, evenly divided by sex and distributed through the age categories'¹³² (*Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). These conversations centred on the meaning and purpose of life, motivation for getting up when discouraged, and the experience of wonder, awe or ecstasy. From these interviews, Fowler then outlined a six staged, excluding the pre-stage, hierarchical model of faith development. Each stage is considered to have a strength which is seen as positive or a danger which is seen as negative and it is possible for the individual to vacillate between the two.

The link between faith and cognitive development can be clearly seen from the beginning of Fowler's stages. As psychologists have noted a correlation between language and thought, Fowler has suggested a pre-stage from 0-2 years, called infancy and undifferentiated faith because language has not fully developed in a child. Consequently, this stage is considered to be inaccessible to empirical research. Thus Fowler recognises the importance of the relationship with primary caregivers as it is through this that the child has its first pre-images of God which are formed before language concepts. Corresponding very much to Erikson's first stage of psycho-social development of trust versus mistrust, Fowler purports that at this stage there is a fusion of the seeds of trust, courage, hope and love in an undifferentiated way which competes with sensed threats of harm in an infant's environment. The strength of this stage is the trust and relationship between the primary caregivers. The danger however, is the lack of mutual relationships which could lead to either the child's desires dominating the relationship or the child becoming isolated and failing to develop a relationship through experience of neglect or

¹³² Fowler, pg 317

inconsistencies¹³³ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*).

From this pre-stage, the child now moves to the next level which is Stage 1. This is called Intuitive-Projective Faith. The age range for this stage is considered to be from about two to seven years and correlates with Piaget's preoperational stage. Fowler notes that as thought and language emerges the child is enabled to use new symbols of speech and symbolic representation to organise his or her sensory experience into meaningful units. Fowler describes children at this stage as being unable to have two different perspectives on the same object as they assume that their experiences and perceptions is the only one¹³⁴ (*Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). This, he posits, is the stage at which children become more aware of self and are egotistic. Fowler also notes that from a cognitive developmental perspective, the child's thinking is fluid and magical. As this phase is filled with fantasy and imitation, it is possible that the actions and stories of the visible faith of the primary carers can influence children powerfully and permanently. The strength of this stage is the birth of imagination and the ability to relate their experience of the world in powerful images especially through stories. The danger is that the child's imagination could be affected through images of terror and destructiveness or could be exploited either wittingly or unwittingly through reinforcement of taboos and moral and doctrinal expectations¹³⁵ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*).

While the adult may have a powerful influence on the imagination in Stage 1, the child now transitions to Stage 2 where s/he identifies with the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolise belonging to his or her community. The age range for this stage is between eight and ten years and coincides with the emergence of Piaget's concrete operational stage where the child is beginning to differentiate between fact and fiction¹³⁶

¹³³ Fowler, pg 121

¹³⁴ Fowler, pg 123

¹³⁵ Fowler, pgs 133 - 134

¹³⁶ Fowler, pg 135

(*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). Accordingly, this stage is called Mythic-Literal Faith as beliefs, moral rules and attitudes are interpreted literally. The person at Stage 2 is able to take the perspective of another person and begins to construct their world based on reciprocal fairness and justice. It is also the stage that symbolic and dramatic materials can have a powerful effect and children can give a detailed account of an event that has occurred. As the child develops inductive and deductive reasoning, fact can be separated from fiction. However, the ability to reflect and conceptualise meanings has not been fully developed. The strength of this stage is the narrative and the emergence of story, drama and myth as giving coherence to experience. The danger is that with the limitations of literalness and a reliance on reciprocity, there can be a manifestation of characteristics such as over controlling, stilted perfectionism, or an abasing sense of badness because of mistreatment or neglect by others¹³⁷ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*).

Synthetic-Conventional Faith is the next stage and may emerge in adolescence during the period of Piaget's formal operational thought. Fowler notes that it is a time of revolution in physical and emotional life, yet through formal operational thinking the Stage 3 person is able to reflect on their thinking and see patterns of meaning. Fowler posits that the reason for most conversions during adolescence is that there is a religious hunger for a God who knows, confirms and accepts the self deeply while serving as the infinite guarantor of self as it is forming personal identity and faith¹³⁸ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). According to Fowler, this stage has become a permanent place of equilibrium. He explains that it is conformist in that it is aware of the expectations and judgments of significant others but is not secure in its own identity and autonomous judgment to have an independent perspective. The strength of this stage is one's becoming in identity and faith but there are twofold dangers. One can become so concerned with the expectations and evaluations of others

¹³⁷ Fowler, pgs 149 - 150

¹³⁸ Fowler, pg 150 - 153

that the power to act independently may be jeopardised. On the other hand, interpersonal betrayals can lead to despair about a personal principle of ultimate being or to a compensatory intimacy with God unrelated to mundane relations¹³⁹ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*).

Although Stage 4 can emerge in young adulthood, Fowler suggests that many people do not reach this and for some, not until the mid-thirties or forties. This stage is called Individuative-Reflective Faith. This is a time where faith structures and commitment are examined and truth is looked at from its cultural trappings. A number of unavoidable tensions therefore have to be faced; for example individuality versus the group, subjectivity versus objectivity. For Fowler, the self, which has been sustained by others, now becomes more independent. To maintain that new identity it develops a framework which is conscious of its own boundaries, inner connections and awareness of itself as a 'worldview'. There is a differentiation of Self (identity) and outlook (worldview) from those of others and this is acknowledged in how one reacts, interprets and judges self and others. In stage 4, symbols are translated into concepts. The strength is the ability to reflect critically on identity (self) and outlook (ideology). The danger is the over-reliance on the conscious mind and critical thought¹⁴⁰ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*).

Fowler admits that Stage 5 faith, not usually reached before midlife, is hard to describe. He calls this stage Conjunctive Faith. This stage, as a way of seeing, knowing, committing surpasses the either/or of Stage 4 and perceives both or many sides of an issue simultaneously¹⁴¹ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). Fowler calls this attention to the pattern of interrelatedness in things 'dialogical knowing'. Stage 5, is characterised by 'detachment' which allows reality to speak its word, regardless of the impact the word has on the security or self-esteem of the knower. During this stage the

¹³⁹ Fowler, pgs 172 -173

¹⁴⁰ Fowler pg 182-183

¹⁴¹ Fowler, pg 185

self becomes more integrated than the previous stage where there was a struggle to adapt the tensions to reality. Another characteristic of this stage is what Fowler calls a 'second naiveté' where symbolic power is reunited with conceptual meanings. Through a new reclaiming and reworking of one's past, one is able to open up to the voices of the 'deeper self'. Part of this will require a critical recognition of the social unconscious; the myths and everything that has influenced us or built into the self system because of our background. This stage is then alive to paradox and the truth in apparent contradictions. This stage tries to unify opposites in mind and experience. The strength of this stage is in the ability to see and be in one's group most powerful meanings while recognising that they are relative and partial. Its danger is that people can become inactive, complacent and cynically withdraw due to a paradoxical understanding of truth¹⁴² (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*).

The next stage, Universalizing Faith, is considered to be extremely rare. It overcomes the paradox of Stage 5 through 'a moral and ascetic actualisation of the universalizing apprehensions'¹⁴³ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). Fowler suggests that other stages are descriptive whilst this one is normative. The self is more disciplined enabling it to make tangible and real the imperatives of absolute love and justice which were realised partially at Stage 5. Stage 6 people have a radical commitment to justice and love and a selfless passion for a transformed world made in accordance to a transcendent being. Those at Stage 6 typically exhibit qualities that shake our usual criteria of normalcy. Their actions and words appear to have an extraordinary and unpredictable quality due to their heedlessness to self-preservation and the vividness of their taste and feel for transcendent moral and religious actuality. Fowler does not consider people at this stage to be perfect but notes that 'greatness of commitment and vision often coexists with great blind spots and limitations'. Representatives of this stage are considered to be Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr.,

¹⁴² Fowler, pg 197 - 198

¹⁴³ Fowler, pg 200

in the last years of his life and Mother Teresa of Calcutta.¹⁴⁴ Fowler notes the 'subversive' impact of their visions and leadership in that as they oppose injustice, they challenge us with the compromises in our own life 'that have acquired the sanction of conventionalised understandings of injustice'.¹⁴⁵ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*) Although Stage 6 is influenced by Niebuhr's monotheism and the Christian concept of the kingdom of God, Fowler still thinks it can be applied to all religions.

From the description above, it is clear that Fowler's stages are based on a western scientific concept of what it means to 'know'. This is a very intellectual approach to faith and according to Fowler, not many people move beyond Stage 3 and if they do, it is not until their thirties or forties. Very few people reach Stage 6 and this is the Stage that the Transcendent is mentioned. From this perspective, it would appear that the relationship with the Transcendent is missing in the majority of people who claim to have some kind of faith which is contrary to Christian tradition. Thus, it is possible to see why there may be a major controversy between those who identify faith as a gift from God from the biblical verses at the beginning of the chapter and adherents of Fowler's faith development theory.

Critique and interrelation with Project

Fowler's work will be critiqued from the following perspectives: his definition of faith, his concept of development, the differing psychological theories, empirical research, view of the self and epistemology. At the same time, I will also bring in Fowler's response to his critics and then show how it relates to the project.

Firstly, a major criticism of Fowler's work is his definition of faith. Fowler acknowledged his indebtedness to his former tutor, Wilfred Smith, observing his linguistic abilities. However, Timothy Paul Jones,¹⁴⁶ (*The*

¹⁴⁴ Fowler, pgs 200 - 201

¹⁴⁵ Fowler, pg 202

¹⁴⁶ Jones, Timothy Paul *The Basis of James W. Fowler's Understanding of Faith in the Research of Wilfred Cantwell Smith: An Examination from an Evangelical Perspective* Religious Education Vol.

Basis of James W. Fowler's Understanding of Faith in the Research of Wilfred Cantwell Smith: An Examination from an Evangelical Perspective), has questioned Smith's understanding of the writings of the early Christians noting that the early Christians did not separate form from content; they not only had faith in a person but also believed that certain assertions were true. He pointed out that in the early modern era there was not a shift from personal loyalty as claimed by Smith, but a reduction of faith to objective assent.¹⁴⁷ Gabriel Moran is also critical of the distinction made between faith and belief. He contends that there are several meanings of belief and that they are all related to faith¹⁴⁸ (*Religious Education Development*). Therefore, it would seem that Fowler's premise is faulty. James E Loder notes that Fowler acknowledges that there is a discrepancy between his use of faith and that in the gospels and the Johannine and Pauline materials in the Bible but does not deal with it¹⁴⁹ (*The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective*). William O Avery,¹⁵⁰ ('A Lutheran examines James W Fowler' in Astley J & Francis L (eds.) *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development*), also challenged the notion that faith can be separated from the object of faith. He argued that Fowler's definition of faith makes it a human act and therefore undercuts the radical primacy of the gospel. From a different perspective, Alison Le Cornu maintains that within a constructivist paradigm, there is a connection between humans and social knowledge. She contends that rather than seeing faith as a form, it should be understood as a '*form of interaction with content*'. Content contributes to and in many ways accounts for form and to dissociate the two is to skew an understanding of the latter¹⁵¹ (*People's Ways of Believing: Learning Processes and Faith Outcomes*).

90 No. 4 Fall 2004 345 -357 (The Religious Education Association) pg 350

¹⁴⁷ Jones, pg 352

¹⁴⁸ Moran, G *Religious Education Development* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Winston Press) 1983, pg 124

¹⁴⁹ Loder, James E *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (San Francisco: Jossey -Bass) 1998, pg 258

¹⁵⁰ Avery, William O 'A Lutheran examines James W Fowler' in Astley J & Francis L (eds.) *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development* pg 124

¹⁵¹ Le Cornu, Alison (2005) *People's Ways of Believing: Learning Processes and Faith Outcomes*, Religious Education: The official Journal of the Religious Education Association, 100:4, 425-446

Discussing this from a child's perspective, Bonnie Miller-McLemore notes that this way of separating the structures of faith and content is unwieldy with children. She makes the point that for those who work with children, 'there is no easy distinction between how one makes meaning in a generic sense and the specific practices, rituals, traditions, stories, and convictions that hold meaning'¹⁵² (*Whither the Children? Childhood in Religious Education*). She argues that children's faith grows in the midst of particular beliefs and practices that Fowler thinks might distort things for children. He does not talk about how things like values, power and story are preserved and conveyed in the lives of children, the beliefs that are conveyed and also the content.¹⁵³ However, Fowler's counter argument to this issue acknowledges that the content of religious faith traditions is important. Writing with Mary Dell, he describes the content (the teachings, scriptures, practices, and ethical orientations, with their substance and power)¹⁵⁴ as the structuring power and warns that they should never be ignored when using faith development theory. Fowler and Dell advocate that the primary goal of religious education is not to advance stages but to pay attention to stage and stage advancement to shape teaching and therefore movement in stage advancement is a by-product of teaching the substances and practices of faith¹⁵⁵ (*Stages of Faith from Infancy through Adolescence: Reflections on Three Decades of Faith Development Theory*).

From the foregoing it would seem that Fowler has responded to his critics about the separation of content and structures but there is still a concern as to whether the faith proposed by Fowler is Christian faith. Within Christianity, the Biblical view of faith is that it is a gift from God. Moran clarifies this position by explaining that faith is not an object or a human possession but is a gift to which a human being responds¹⁵⁶ (*Religious Education Development*). Furthermore, Avery argues that if faith is a gift,

¹⁵² Miller-McLemore, Bonnie *Whither the Children? Childhood in Religious Education* Journal of Religion, Vol. 86, No. 4 (October 2006), pp. 635-657 The University of Chicago Press pg 641

¹⁵³ Miller-McLemore, pg 642

¹⁵⁴ Fowler, James W and Dell Mary Lynn 'Stages of Faith from Infancy through Adolescence: Reflections on Three Decades of Faith Development Theory' in Roehlkepartain, Eugene C ; King Pamela Ebstyne; Benson, Peter L.(eds.) *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence* (Thousand Oaks, CA. US: Sage Publications, Inc) 2006 pgs 34 – 35

¹⁵⁵ Fowler and Dell, pg 44

¹⁵⁶ Moran G, pg 122

then the human attempt to develop one's faith is inappropriate¹⁵⁷ ('A Lutheran examines James W Fowler' in Astley J & Francis L (eds.) *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development*). Loder also contends that 'faith is not fundamentally a developmental phenomenon. If faith is a human response to God's grace, it must be rooted in God'¹⁵⁸ (*The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective*). Similarly, Timothy Paul Jones is adamant that Fowler's stages of faith 'may neither be equated with Christian faith development nor amended to correspond to Christian faith-development'.¹⁵⁹ Positing that Christian faith development focuses on the image of Christ in the believer which has an external source he notes that Fowler's faith development is based on the internal awareness of God. In contrast, the 'imago Christi' is a unique feature of Christian existence, dependent on the free act of God in Jesus Christ by which Christian faith is formed'¹⁶⁰ (*The Basis of James W. Fowler's Understanding of Faith in the Research of Wilfred Cantwell Smith: An Examination from an Evangelical Perspective*).

Therefore, according to Avery, 'Fowler's definition of faith suggests that faith is determined by development processes and is a construction of human understanding'¹⁶¹ ('A Lutheran examines James W Fowler' in Astley J & Francis L (eds.) *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development*). He also added that Fowler's definition did not allow for idolatry or unfaithfulness. Thus, it would be pointless to challenge a person over their behaviour because one could conclude that they were not wilfully disobedient; they just had not reached the stage of understanding of how to behave in the appropriate way. Similarly, Miller-McLemore suggested that Fowler avoids questions about wrong doing, evil or sin and grace although most religious traditions acknowledge a propensity towards self-preservation, ethnocentric group loyalty, violence towards others and a

¹⁵⁷ Avery, pg 124

¹⁵⁸ Loder, James E, pg 31

¹⁵⁹ Jones, pg 355

¹⁶⁰ Jones, pg 355

¹⁶¹ Avery, pg 124

loss of meaning¹⁶² (*Whither the Children?: Childhood in Religious Education*).

Thus, a fundamental question, posed by Moran is whether 'Piagetian style theory is appropriate if one wishes to describe a journey of faith' ¹⁶³ (*Religious Education Development*). The overriding response appears to be in the negative. Bryan, writing on the identity of adolescence, has warned that the Christian approach to personal development should not be confused with faith or religious development.¹⁶⁴ She is critical of Fowler's approach admonishing that 'there is a danger that this is isolated from the rest of personal development and the integration of faith into personal identity formation is given insufficient attention'. ¹⁶⁵ For Bryan, the Christian view of human development is aimed at personality development and spiritual maturity. Its focus is more on becoming rather than being. The emphasis is on progression towards God with Jesus as the model of what Christians strive to become. Within these accounts, there is also an acknowledgement of the relationship with God and others which is founded in love.¹⁶⁶ (Being and Becoming: Adolescence' in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*). Bryan suggests that unlike psychological perspectives, there is more agreement about the goal of development although there is a difference in theological language and emphases between accounts. To support her views, she therefore cites the following: Kierkegaard who suggests that the goal for the self is to become transparent before God; St. Augustine who purports that the quest for God is the overriding goal and this orders all other desires and needs and John Wesley who saw Christian development as growth in grace and holiness. The criteria for evaluation in Christian accounts are moral behaviour, relationship with others and faith and commitment to God.¹⁶⁷ Bryan also notes that Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Merton view the search for God and the true self as one and the

¹⁶² Miller-McLemore, pg 642

¹⁶³ Moran, Pg 110

¹⁶⁴ Bryan pg 141

¹⁶⁵ Bryan, pg 142

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, pg 140

¹⁶⁷ Bryan pg 141

same. 'Hence as we grow in our knowledge and commitment to God, we develop our understanding of ourselves and our self identity'¹⁶⁸ (Being and Becoming: Adolescence' in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*). However, Bryan still uses the word development and the use of the word progression indicates that she has a view of moving from a lower to a higher level. However, unlike the cognitive structuralist approach, there is no separation of structure from content and no invariant stages.

Overlapping with the use of development and the structuralist approach means that some have seen Fowler's work not as faith development but as moral or ego development. Moran points out that Kohlberg has been critical of Fowler's use of faith since it is not distinguishable from moral development and that Kohlberg associates it with Jane Loevinger's theory of ego development,¹⁶⁹ (*Religious Education Development*), which is concerned with the transformation of character structures and includes some topics such as moral development, socialisation, character structure and cognitive development¹⁷⁰ (*Ego Development*). Loder therefore dismisses them as stages of faith in any biblical or theological sense¹⁷¹ (*The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective*). Loder claims that, like other structuralists, the movement from stage 1 - 6 is a movement out of egocentrism. Loder is critical of the structuralist approach where the stages are invariant and have to be attained sequentially; no one can understand two stages above their position. However, Fowler has responded to the foregoing issues by claiming that his critics have forced him to try and clarify two concepts that in theology have been called nature and grace. Fowler therefore proposes that the progression of stages from primal to conjunctive faith which is comparable to processes in cognitive, moral judgement, psychosocial and ego development can be called natural. However, movement to the universalizing stage seem to 'require an explanation based on the

¹⁶⁸ Bryan pg 141

¹⁶⁹ Moran, pg 108

¹⁷⁰ Loevinger, Jane with assistance of Augusto Blasi *Ego Development* (California: Jossey-Bass Inc Publishers) 1971 ix

¹⁷¹ Loder, pg 255

initiatives of the transcendent – of being, or of spirit¹⁷² (*Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith*). Fowler explains that he believes that grace is present from the beginning of creation and that human development towards holiness involves the synergy between human potential and the mediation of the Spirit. However, he posits that the determining factor that involves a move from one stage to the next is the person's conscious or unconscious availability to the Spirit. If persons are in enmity with the Spirit, there is likely to be a blockage. However, 'when one who was previously blocked, experiences the effective breakthrough of the Spirit that brings release and new openness to synergy with Grace, we are in the presence of what theologians have traditionally called salvation or saving Grace'¹⁷³ (*Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith*).

Next, in addition to the difficulties associated with the human developmental model, is the concept of development. Sharon Parks has noted that 'while the word 'faith' may be problematic for theologians, the word 'development' is the first point of sensitivity for critical social theorists, especially because of its use by economists'¹⁷⁴ ('Faith Development in a Changing World' in Astley J & Francis L (eds.) *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development*). This is because the word development when contrasted with the economic development of underdeveloped nations is linked with North American and Western European imperialism. She posits that some would argue that the word reflects the idea of progress which dominates our achievement and consumer based society. Parks suggested the word transformation might be used in addition or in preference to development. She advises that a theological task for faith development theory is the critical examination of its central metaphors¹⁷⁵ ('Faith Development in a Changing World' in

¹⁷² Fowler, James W. *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass) 2000 pg 59

¹⁷³ Fowler, *Becoming Adult* pg 59 -60

¹⁷⁴ Parks, Sharon 'Faith Development in a Changing World' in Astley J & Francis L (eds.) *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development* pg 102

¹⁷⁵ Parks, pg 102

Astley J & Francis L (eds.) *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development*). Moran has also noted that the term development is used mainly by psychologists and economists¹⁷⁶ (*Religious Education Development*). He has suggested that human development is too important to be given over to any of the three groups. Moran is critical of the concept of development held by people today, which he claims, seems to have originated with the rise of historical consciousness in the nineteenth century. 'Everything in the universe is assumed to un-fold, e-merge, or de-velop; that is, it starts at one stage, undergoes a systematic change, and arrives at a more complete stage'.¹⁷⁷ He criticises the optimistic view of modern people who link development to the word progress and suggests that the ancient notions that things go downhill or in a circle have not been very attractive to the modern western mind. However, he concluded that Christian educators should think carefully before rejecting the word development. At the same time, he issues a warning for those who advocate developmental theories to think through the idea of development¹⁷⁸ (*Religious Education Development*).

Additionally, one of the major difficulties with Fowler's theory is not that he uses developmental theories but that he combines competing theories. Bryan observed that in the different psychological accounts of psychology there is variability in evaluations and definitions of the goal of development not only in academic psychology but in the different schools of therapeutic psychology. She outlines the goals for the following psychologists: For Freud it is the individual's sense of psychic unity, for Jung it is the individuated self and growth in consciousness, for humanistic psychology it is self-actualisation, for Piaget the aim of cognitive development is abstract thought and manipulation, for Kohlberg the aim of moral development is to attain personal ethical principles.¹⁷⁹ (*Being and Becoming: Adolescence* in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*) She points out that this fragmented picture

¹⁷⁶ Moran G, pg 4

¹⁷⁷ Moran, pg 17

¹⁷⁸ Moran, pgs 22-23

¹⁷⁹ Bryan, pg 139

indicates the complexity of human nature and the different approaches which are applied to its study.¹⁸⁰ Thus researchers such as Marlene Jardine and Henning Viljoen,¹⁸¹ (*Fowler's Theory of Faith Development: An Evaluative Discussion*), have claimed that Fowler made an error in combining Piaget's structural approach and Erikson's psychosocial development in order to balance the cognitive and affective domains but then goes on to rely on the cognitive approach. They argue that the logical deduction from this is that if a person's cognitive ability is genetically determined, it would also have implications for a person's potential for faith development. If according to the Christian tradition, grace has a transformative power in a person's life so that they become less sinless, then if one is permanently caught in a deficient faith stance, then the power of grace to alter one's situation would be largely ineffectual¹⁸² (*Fowler's Theory of Faith Development: An Evaluative Discussion*).

A further concern in Fowler's theory is its empirical basis. Stephen Parker argues that this blending together of different psychological theories contributes to problems researchers have encountered in trying to measure empirically faith development¹⁸³ (*Research in Fowler's Faith Development Theory: A Review Article*). He cites a number of people who have tried to measure it but the interaction of the different facets makes it problematic. He also stated that it has been difficult to use Fowler's faith development interview. He cites Moseley et al (1993) who reported that the scores yield a continuum rather than scores that cluster around stages. Parker suggests that the scoring raises difficulties and notes that Fowler has not published his recommended scorings¹⁸⁴ (*Research in Fowler's Faith Development Theory: A Review Article*). He is also critical of the faith development interview for giving too much attention to the cognitive aspects of faith. Heinz Streib has called for a review of research

¹⁸⁰ Bryan, pg 140

¹⁸¹ Jardine, Marlene M. and Viljoen, Henning G. *Fowler's Theory of Faith Development: An Evaluative Discussion* Religious Education Vol. 87 Winter 1998 pg 84

¹⁸² Ibid pg 84

¹⁸³ Parker, Stephen *Research in Fowler's Faith Development Theory: A Review Article* Review of Religious Research, Vol.51, No. 3 (March 2010) pp.233-252 (Religious Research Association, Inc.) pg 234

¹⁸⁴ Parker, pg 236

strategy in faith development in order to improve the qualitative instrument. He notes that while others have attempted to redesign aspects of the instrument, it needs a coherent procedure to integrate the structure, narrative and content diversity¹⁸⁵ (*Faith Development Research Revisited: Accounting for Diversity in Structure, Content, and Narrativity of Faith*).

In an empirical research project investigating ways in which people's commitment to faith content influenced their ways of learning, Le Cornu discovered that Fowler's growth of the self, a dimension of faith development did not correlate with Fowler's schemes. She found that most types of learners developed two selves and not the integrated self that Fowler suggested. Fowler defended his notion of self, arguing that faith has a triadic structure; the self, the primal and significant others in the self's relational matrix and the Ultimate other. Therefore, in faith development theory, the study of self must attend to the relational matrix and its change over time through the content and shape of one's life experience. She therefore claims that there is a theory of self through time constructing meanings in the different relationships involved in faith¹⁸⁶ (*People's Ways of Believing: Learning Processes and Faith Outcomes*). Le Cornu therefore concluded, concurring with Astley, that the stages are idealistic and prescriptive and argues that from the current available data there is no evidence for sequentially hierarchical stages of faith¹⁸⁷ (*People's Ways of Believing: Learning Processes and Faith Outcomes*). However, Fowler continues to contend that as Piaget and Kohlberg maintained that their stages are sequential, invariant and hierarchical, therefore his stages based on their work are the same¹⁸⁸ (*Faith Development Theory and the Postmodern Challenges*).

Le Cornu also suggests that Fowler's view of self as an independent autonomous person was not seen in many of the respondents and concluded that universal faith,' at least bearing the characteristics outlined

¹⁸⁵ Streib, Heinz *Faith Development Research Revisited: Accounting for Diversity in Structure, Content, and Narrativity of Faith* International journal for the Psychology of Religion, 15 (2), 99 – 121 2005 pgs 114 -115

¹⁸⁶ Fowler, Faith development Theory pg 163-164

¹⁸⁷ Le Cornu, *People's Ways of Believing*

¹⁸⁸ Fowler, Faith Development Theory pg 167

by Fowler is erroneous¹⁸⁹ (*People's Ways of Believing: Learning Processes and Faith Outcomes*). Similarly, Parker's review of research found difficulties in replicating across different cultures¹⁹⁰ (*Research in Fowler's Faith Development Theory: A Review Article*). Consequently, there are major issues with the notion of development in work related to Black Christian formation. Firstly, the concept of development from a western viewpoint has been called into question by proponents of the discipline of African psychology such as Akbar,¹⁹¹ ('The Afrocentric Paradigm': *Papers in African Psychology*) and Wade Nobles¹⁹² (*Standing in the River: African (Black) Psychology Transformed and Transforming*). This movement, originating in the United States of America has noted how western psychology has been used to pathologise the Black community. It therefore rejects the concept of development or growth based on individuation and argues against an identification of the needs of Black people based on western models of psychology. Akbar points out that the European approach to psychology from 'Alder's "creative self" through Maslow's "actualised self" and Mead's "looking glass self", the conception is consistent that self is an individual phenomenon'¹⁹³ ('The Afrocentric Paradigm': *Papers in African Psychology*). He is therefore sceptical of an approach based on individual differences when 'African Psychology conceptualizes self as an unqualified collective phenomenon while respecting the uniqueness of the individual self as a component of the collectivity'.¹⁹⁴ Therefore this concept of development is called into question as applied to faith.

Moreover, it has been noted that Fowler's research sample conducted in the USA, included 2% of African American people. Not only is the above concept of development as a culturally bound idea in question but the representation of Black people in the sample. Even if we accepted that the concept of development covered all cultures, there would still be concerns

¹⁸⁹ Le Cornu pg 437 -438

¹⁹⁰ Parker, pg 241

¹⁹¹ Akbar, *Papers in African Psychology*

¹⁹² Nobles, Wade *Standing in the River: African (Black) Psychology Transformed and Transforming* (London: Karia Press) 1992

¹⁹³ Akbar, pg 67

¹⁹⁴ Akbar, pg 68

about the sample. Gilligan,¹⁹⁵ (*In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*), a contemporary of Fowler, has suggested from her work with adolescent girls and women that models of development based on male experience are inadequate for understanding the psychological development of females. Similarly, I would argue that models of development based on White participants are inadequate for understanding the psychological development of Black people and consequently their faith experiences. A model is therefore needed that takes into account African psychology and theology.

Lastly, the question of epistemology is an area of concern. Akbar explains that the essential themes in epistemology are about the legitimate form of acquiring knowledge and identifying that knowledge has been acquired. Thus in defining what and how authentic knowledge is acquired also determines the status of the knowledge and who has access to it. Forms of knowledge based on western rational/scientific paradigm are therefore considered to be more acceptable than others. Consequently, African epistemology is not considered to be on the same par as European epistemology so that like Black or African psychology, Black theology is still on the fringes of theological education.¹⁹⁶ Akbar points out that European American epistemology 'identifies knowledge as essentially recall or recognition of essential objects, processes, or experiences within the typical European American experience. The key element of this epistemology is that what is known is external to the person and one's knowledge pool is assessed by what is known of his external world'¹⁹⁷ ('The Afrocentric Paradigm': *Papers in African Psychology*).

An extension of this idea is shown by Marimba Ani who in comparing European and African knowledge states that the European 'trains himself to eliminate emotion and to replace it with 'reason', thereby achieving the illusion of superiority to those who are part of Nature and whose source of

¹⁹⁵ Gilligan, Carol *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press) 1982, 1993

¹⁹⁶ Akbar pg 74

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, pg 74

power is spirit'¹⁹⁸ (*Yurugu: An African Centred Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behaviour*). Akbar posits that the epistemology of African psychology assumes a universal knowledge which is rooted in the make-up of the human being and where the most direct experience of the self is through emotion or affect¹⁹⁹ ('The Afrocentric Paradigm': *Papers in African Psychology*). Since the root of Pentecostalism is in Black spirituality, it is not surprising that it has been argued that 'Pentecostal theology is rooted in an affective, narrative epistemology'²⁰⁰ (*Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*).

Therefore, what illumination does Fowler's model bring to the faith formation of children and young people within a specific ethnic, cultural and denominational group, that of COGIC? To apply Fowler's concept of faith development to work with people of the African Diaspora would perpetuate the view that western forms of knowledge are more acceptable than others. Although claiming that his stages of faith can be applied universally, the issue of definition and epistemology means that Fowler's theory could be problematic within this context.

Notwithstanding, in relation to the project, consideration has been given to aspects of Fowler's work. Fowler's work has influenced many of the historic denominations in the United Kingdom. With little research in terms of faith formation in Britain from a Black Holiness/Pentecostal perspective, some people who have attended conferences where the stage theories have been proposed have considered integrating Fowler's theories into their work with children and young people. Thus, it was necessary to consider whether Fowler's theories were diametrically opposed to a Pentecostal epistemology, hermeneutic and therefore pedagogy or whether there was some interaction between the two. This would be ascertained by comparison with the interviews.

Accepting as Fowler conceded, that his model is a way of knowing and not of faith formation, means that where it concurs with aspects of a

¹⁹⁸ Ani, Marimba, *Yurugu: An African Centred Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behaviour* (USA: African World Press, Inc) 1994 pg 389

¹⁹⁹ Akbar, pg 75

²⁰⁰ Smith, James K. A pg 12

Pentecostal epistemology, it can be useful when considering pedagogy. By using Erikson's psycho-social stages, Fowler had recognised the affective domain (on which Pentecostal epistemology is based), albeit from a Euro-centric perspective. Fowler has also stressed the role of the imagination in the younger age range and the need to be available to the Spirit, albeit not until Stage 6. While concurring with the need to be available to the Spirit, Pentecostals would assert that the Holy Spirit can change lives at any age. However, it is possible to engage with Fowler through a common belief in being available to the Spirit. In terms of pedagogy, Fowler has also attempted to address issues of definition by arguing that the faith content is a supporting structure to faith development. Therefore the aim is not to find ways to move through the stages but to use them to shape teaching. Whilst disagreeing with his invariant stages, Fowler has shown the importance of considering the developmental needs of children and young people. From a developmental and pedagogical perspective therefore of engaging with them and planning appropriate curricular materials, Fowler's work is useful.

Summary

Fowler's definition of faith, which makes a distinction between faith and belief, is controversial. Some researchers like Jones, (*The Basis of James W. Fowler's Understanding of Faith in the Research of Wilfred Cantwell Smith: An Examination from an Evangelical Perspective*) and Moran, (*Religious Education Development*), argue that belief and faith are always related. Others like Avery ('A Lutheran examines James W Fowler' in Astley J & Francis L (eds.) *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development*), assert that the distinction between faith and content makes it a human act and the concept is therefore at variance with the biblical concept of faith as a gift from God. Jones (*The Basis of James W. Fowler's Understanding of Faith in the Research of Wilfred Cantwell Smith: An Examination from an Evangelical Perspective*) refutes the notion implied in Fowler's theory of the internal awareness of God based on an internal source. For Jones, the focus of Christian faith development is the 'imago Christi' in the believer which has an external source of the free act of God in Jesus

Christ. Thus it is questionable whether Fowler's definition could be called Christian faith.

Influenced by the human developmental theories of Erikson, Piaget and Kohlberg, Fowler has described faith 'as a way of knowing' (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*). However, not only has the overall concept of development been challenged but the application of developmental psychology with its invariant and rigid stages to faith within a Christian context. Bryan (Being and Becoming: Adolescence' in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*) has implied that Fowler has confused personality development with faith development and Moran and Loder have associated his stages with ego and moral development. Jardine and Viljoen have also accused Fowler of using competing psychological theories (*Fowler's Theory of Faith Development: An Evaluative Discussion*). This in itself, Parker has pointed out, has also led to difficulties which researchers have encountered in trying to measure empirically faith development studies (*Research in Fowler's Faith Development Theory: A Review Article*).

Another issue is Fowler's view of self. Le Cornu (*People's Ways of Believing: Learning Processes and Faith Outcomes*), discovered that Fowler's growth of the self, a dimension of faith development did not correlate with Fowler's schemes. The European concept of development and the view of self are also questioned by African psychologists such as Akbar ('The Afrocentric Paradigm': *Papers in African Psychology*) and Nobles (*Standing in the River: African (Black) Psychology Transformed and Transforming*). Furthermore, in terms of epistemology, African psychologists have also been critical of the status given to European forms of knowledge which relies on the cognitive domain in comparison to African forms of knowledge which is based on the affective domain (*Yurugu: An African Centred Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behaviour*). Fowler's theory relies on the cognitive domain which is in contrast to both a Pentecostal and Black epistemology. In addition, the

research has been based mainly on white males making it difficult to generalise to different cultures and to women.

Despite these criticisms, it is still possible to engage with Fowler by accepting that the model is not one of faith formation but of ways of knowing. Pentecostalism is rooted in the affective domain and Fowler has recognised the affective domain, although from a European perspective. Therefore where his theory overlaps with Pentecostal epistemology it can be useful for pedagogy. Furthermore, in later writing with Mary Dell, (*Stages of Faith from Infancy through Adolescence: Reflections on Three Decades of Faith Development Theory*), Fowler acknowledges the importance of content in religious faith traditions and advocates that it should not be ignored when using faith development theory. He has also stressed the role of the imagination and the need to be available to the Holy Spirit; the latter being particularly pertinent to Pentecostalism.

Fowler's main contribution is in the consideration of children's developmental needs and therefore of pedagogy. Whilst useful to this project, it is inadequate by itself in attempting to address the questions of Black faith formation. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate researchers with different approaches.

Chapter 4 - Thomas Groome: Shared Christian Praxis Approach

You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' This is the first Law.
(Mark12:30 NLT)

Although the approach to Christian education by Thomas Groome,²⁰¹ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*), is in stark contrast to James Fowler's model, it has been observed that Groome aligns himself to Fowler's developmental stages²⁰² (*Educating for life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*). Nevertheless, while Fowler's model is individualistic, Groome's is focused on communal praxis. Jack L. Seymour,²⁰³ ('Approaches to Christian Education' in Seymour Jack L. & Miller Donald E et al (1982) *Contemporary Approaches: Christian Education*) has suggested that while the 'metaphor' or concept associated with Fowler's method is 'person', that of Groome's is 'meaning'. Fowler perceives faith as a way of knowing while Groome considers it to be a gift from God,²⁰⁴ (*Sharing Faith: A comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*), and concentrates on a pedagogy that enables people to 'bring their lives to their faith and their faith to their lives' ²⁰⁵ (*Remembering and Imagining*).

In his writing,²⁰⁶ (*Remembering and Imagining*) Groome acknowledges a number of influences. He describes how his parents shaped his early life; his father, a local Irish politician rehearsed his political speeches with his children. As a Catholic, his father was generous towards other religious traditions but was critical of his own church for its misuse of power and failing to campaign for the rights of the oppressed. Groome writes that his mother's Christian faith was epitomized through her vocation as a parent

²⁰¹ Groome, Thomas *Sharing Faith*

²⁰² Groome, Thomas *Educating for life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent* (Allen, Texas: Thomas More-An RCL Company-) 1998 pg 396

²⁰³ Seymour, Jack L. 'Approaches to Christian Education' in Seymour Jack L. & Miller Donald E et al (1982) *Contemporary Approaches: Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon Press) pg 16

²⁰⁴ Groome, Thomas *Sharing Faith* pg 18

²⁰⁵ Groome, Thomas *Remembering and Imagining* Religious Education vol.98 No.4 Fall The Religious Education Association pgs 511 -520 2003 pg 519

²⁰⁶ Groome, Thomas *Remembering and Imagining*

as she nurtured a deep religious identity in each of her nine children. He attended St Patrick's Seminary in Ireland where a placement teaching religion in a local boys' high school paved the foundation for his work as a religious educator. Vatican II (1962-1965) happened during the midst of his training. Groome describes it as a 'great awakening'²⁰⁷ for him as the old manuals of dogma and moral theology were replaced by textbooks of the new theologians. Writing more than three decades after, Groome admits that he imbibed the spirit of renewal from Vatican II and is 'still living off the hope that Vatican II engendered in our young hearts back in those glory days'²⁰⁸ (*Remembering and Imagining*). After his training, Groome immigrated to America where he furthered his studies. Among the writers who shaped his thinking were the Peruvian and liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez,²⁰⁹ (*Liberating Theology – Gustavo Gutierrez*), who in advocating for the political and social liberation of the poor viewed theology as a critical reflection on historical praxis executed within the boundaries of faith; Paulo Freire's pedagogy in empowering illiterate oppressed people in Brazil by a process of 'conscientization' (i.e. awakening people's conscious awareness of social, political and economic injustices so that they can take action to restructure them);²¹⁰ (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*) and by the philosophers Jurgen Habermas,²¹¹ (*Postmetaphysical Thinking*), who was particularly critical of western society's reliance on reason but still believed that both international and national conflict could be resolved through rational discussion and Hans Georg Gadamer,²¹² (*Truth and Method*), whose concern with the scientific based approaches to hermeneutics in the humanities led him to a concept of knowledge and truth that incorporates a person's past experiences. In terms of education, Groome stated that he placed his work in dialogue

²⁰⁷ Groome, *Remembering and Imagining* pg 513

²⁰⁸ Groome, *Remembering and Imagining*, pg 514

²⁰⁹ Reamonn Pariac, *Liberating Theology – Gustavo Gutierrez* new Blackfriars Vol.54 No. 643 1973 pgs 564 -570

²¹⁰ Freire, Paulo *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin Books) 1996, first printed 1970 pgs 17 -18

²¹¹ Habermas, Jurgen (translated by William Mark Hohengarten) *Postmetaphysical Thinking* (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers) 1992

²¹² Gadamer, Hans-Georg (translated by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G Marshall) *Truth and Method-second Revised Edition* (London: Crossroad Publishing Company) 1989

with giants who were more interested in drawing out the inner religious spirit of the children than instructing them. Thus he cited men such as John Dewey,²¹³ (*John Dewey: Educational Philosopher*), educational philosopher acknowledged as the father of experiential learning, George Albert Coe who proposed that 'Education is not to press the child into any prearranged mould, but to bring out his normal powers in their own natural order',²¹⁴ (*A Social Review Theory of Religious Education*), and William Rainey Harper,²¹⁵ (*William Rainey Harper: A Giant among Educators*), the first president of the University of Chicago recognised as the father of the college junior movement and acclaimed for his extension programmes during the holidays and weekends in local communities. Groome acknowledges that he has gone beyond the views of these early educators believing that 'this can be done with the intent of forming as well as informing religious identity, and yet without indoctrination'²¹⁶ (*Remembering and Imagining*).

Although Groome does not mention the term 'faith formation', he posits that the learning outcome of Christian religious education is 'to engage the whole 'being' of people, their heads, hearts and lifestyles and it is to inform, form and transform their identity and agency in the world'²¹⁷ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). This account of Christian education seems to have enough derivations of the word 'form' including transform to suggest that Groome was in effect describing faith formation. This view has been juxtaposed alongside my preferred definition of faith formation; a person's progression in faith (a gift from God) towards God with Jesus as their role model,²¹⁸ ('Being and Becoming: Adolescence' in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*), to demonstrate the similarities in meaning. From this, it can be argued that

²¹³ Santce, JT and Givens, William E *John Dewey: Educational Philosopher* The Phi Delta Kappan Vol.34 No 1 (October 1952) pgs 9 -10

²¹⁴ Coe, George Albert *A Social Review Theory of Religious Education* The Biblical World, Vol. 51 No. 5 (May 1918) pg 32

²¹⁵ Williams, Glen D *William Rainey Harper: A Giant among Educators* The Clearing House, Vol. 40 No. 5 January 1966 pgs 270 -275

²¹⁶ Groome, *Remembering and Imagining*, pg 517

²¹⁷ Thomas H. Groome *Sharing Faith* pg 2

²¹⁸ Bryan, pg 140

the progression in faith which is described here suggests a process of change that is similar to Groome's idea of transformation. However, the similarity of the concepts may still engender differences in how the process of change occurs. Groome asserts that 'Christian education should lessen the gap *between* a person's articulated faith and his/her action, that is, his/her knowing of Christ ought to be a doing of Christ like actions. Secondly, our Christian education should help people to personally appropriate the meaning of their faith in a way which enables them to go on reinterpreting and doing its meaning in later life situations. In other words, our Christian education must enable people to become decision makers who exercise their freedom as God's children in creating with God and each other their future'²¹⁹ 'Shared Christian Praxis: A Possible Theory/Method of Religious Education' in Astley, Jeff and Francis, Leslie J (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education*.

Thus, the attraction of Groome's model is his attempt to make an old story ever new. With contemporary gospel songs and choruses, the hymn which contains the lines 'Tell me the old, old story, of Jesus and his love' is probably not sung in church very often, if at all. However, the gospel story can be described as old in the sense that it is over two thousand years old. Yet, in order for it to be relevant in contemporary society, there must be a newness to the story as it is retold in different contexts; across generations, traditions and cultures. Thomas Groome has attempted not only to bridge the old and newness of the story with his 'shared Christian praxis' but has also provided an approach which relates the Christian faith to practical everyday experience across changing contexts. Neville Clement sums up the relevance of this approach succinctly; 'Although its formulation began in the 1970s, Thomas Groome's "shared Christian praxis" remains a challenging formulation of Christian religious educational theory and practice because of its relevance in addressing contemporary sociological, anthropological, educational, philosophical and theological issues arising in the current practice of Christian religious education. Groome's shared Christian praxis is constructed with the purpose to

²¹⁹ Groome, Thomas 'Shared Christian praxis: a possible theory/method of religious education' in Astley, Jeff and Francis, Leslie J (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Christian education*: pg 225

facilitate a dynamic interaction between present-day action and the Christian Story/Vision and to engender action authentic to Christian faith'²²⁰ (*Thomas Groome and the Intersection of Narrative and Action: Praxis, Dialectic and Hermeneutics*). Miriam Charter observed that Groome not only addresses needs in the Catholic Church but those that are also pertinent to Protestant evangelical churches. She explained that these 'are the gap between people's professed beliefs and actions and the lack of personal decision-making as a way of interpreting one's faith commitment in everyday life'²²¹ (*Thomas H Groome's Shared Praxis Approach to Ministry: Questioning its Application in the Protestant Evangelical Church*). Groome's approach is therefore aimed at overcoming these problems.

Premise

In considering his premise, it is obvious that Groome has tried to integrate the views of the theologians, philosophers and educators mentioned previously. Thus, for Groome, Christian education 'is a transcendent, ontological and, a political activity'²²² (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). I shall take these three concepts in turn. Firstly, for Groome, education that is intentionally religious is transcendent as it nurtures people's awareness, experience of and their relationship with a personal God. Through this, people are encouraged to interpret their lives, relationships with others and engage in the world based on their perspective of God. Secondly, Christian education is described as ontological because as people's capacity for the transcendent is nurtured, it shapes their whole way of being in relation to God, self and others. Lastly, It is political (from the original Greek meaning the art of enabling the shared life of citizens) in that it gives people knowledge in a way that shapes their characters both privately and publicly. Recognising that people are located in a historical context, with the corporate

²²⁰ Clement, Neville "Thomas Groome and the Intersection of Narrative and Action: Praxis, Dialectic and Hermeneutics", Australian ejournal of Theology 10 (May 2007)

²²¹ Charter, Miriam *Thomas H Groome's Shared Praxis Approach to Ministry: Questioning its Application in the Protestant Evangelical Church* TrinJ 15NS (1994) 89 -113 pg 89

²²² Groome, pg 11

consequences of their past and shared possibilities of their future, then it is possible to see that Christian education not only shapes the future of the individual but the future of society. Groome asserts that 'Christian religious educators should recognise that 'politics' permeates their whole curriculum – what they teach through content, process and environment. In giving people access to a faith community's Story and Vision, religious educators make choices about which collective memories to make present and toward what end, what paradigms of meaning and criteria of action to propose to people....Likewise *how* we teach and the kinds of teaching/learning environments we create reflect political choices'²²³ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). Having stated its characteristics, Groome then outlines the aims of Christian education: these are the reign of God, lived Christian faith, the wholeness of human freedom that is fullness of life for all and remembrance of being. These three aims will be discussed respectively.

Firstly, from Groome's perspective, the overarching 'telos' of Christian education is to proclaim the reign of God. To those who are more familiar with the symbol 'kingdom of God', Groome gives three reasons why he prefers reign rather than kingdom. He suggests that kingdom is patriarchal and is not good from a feminist perspective; the original Hebrew and Greek words refer to reign rather than a specific place such as realm or domain; alternative words such as commonwealth, rule, new creation are inadequate to express the multiplicity of meanings that realm does²²⁴ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). He contends that reign does not refer to God imposing his will imperialistically but is more akin to God's covenantal relationship with humankind. In support of his thesis, Groome makes reference to the Hebrew Scriptures and the life of Jesus as portrayed in the Christian gospels. He acknowledges that although the Hebrews rarely used the term, they were cognisant of the symbol expressed in the life of Jesus. Groome explains that this symbol

²²³ Groome, pgs 133-135

²²⁴ Groome, Thomas *Sharing Faith* pg 13

denoted the following: God is ever active among humankind; He intends that all people come to live in peace and justice, love and freedom, wholeness and fullness of life (shalom); creation can be brought to full completion; the covenant gives God's people the responsibility to do his will now – to live in a right relationship with God, self and others and creation following the model demonstrated by God in his relationship with humankind²²⁵ ('Shared Christian Praxis: A Possible Theory/Method of Religious Education' in Astley, Jeff and Francis, Leslie J (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education*). Barbara J. Fleisher, ²²⁶ (*From Individual to Corporate Praxis: A Systemic Re-Imagining of Religious Education*) notes that this idea of the reign of God emanates from a sense of Christian mission and recognises the importance of the praxis method in fulfilling this role.

Secondly, Groome argues that while reign symbolises the overall and final purpose that guides what is taught by content, process and environment, the more immediate existential and formal purpose of Christian education is the promotion of lived faith; the way God is and the way he does things. Christian education therefore is seen as an instrument of God's grace to inform, form and transform people in what happens when God has his way. Thus religious educators need to recognise that their work is secondary or instrumental as faith is a gift from God. Basing his views on Jesus' words in Mark 12: 28 - 31 that Christian existence is to engage people's hearts, souls, mind and strength, Groome proposes that lived Christian faith is a holistic affair. It engages the whole of people's 'beings': their bodily, mental and volitional capacities; their heads, hearts and life-styles; cognition, desire and action; understanding, relationship and service; conviction, prayer and agape. This leads Christians to engage in a threefold dynamic of historical activities; believing, trusting and doing

²²⁵ Groome, Thomas Shared Christian Praxis pg 15

²²⁶ Fleischer, Barbara J *From Individual to Corporate Praxis: A Systemic Re-Imagining of Religious Education* in Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association, 99:3,316-333, 2004 pg 318

God's will ²²⁷ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

In considering the promotion of lived faith, Groome suggests that the teaching of the Christian Church about an eternal consequence for living or not living the Christian faith should be reflected in the praxis of Christian education. He contends that the wholeness of human freedom which is fullness of life for all, now and after life, provides both the impetus for and the consequence for people living in Christian faith. Groome explains that freedom is to begin now and involves personal, interpersonal and structural level of human existence. On the personal level, freedom heals our inner brokenness, assures us of God's eternal mercy, and sets us free to truly love ourselves and God. Interpersonally, it is freedom to say yes (and possibly no) to the neighbour with love that does justice and creates liberated zones of 'right relationship'. At the socio-political level, freedom empowers people to challenge the sinful social structures and to create political arrangements that promote fullness of life for all. Groome asserts that freedom as an existential purpose of Christian religious education also had pedagogical advantages; it lends itself to a language that is engaging, consciousness - raising and praxis oriented. The language is engaging as it deals with issues of justice and liberation which are as urgent as when the image of Jesus first appeared as redeemer with associated issues of slavery and ransom; it is consciousness-raising as it prompts people to think socially as well as personally, historically as well as eternally about the effects of sin and the significance of Jesus. It is praxis oriented in that it prompts people to take on the historical responsibilities of the Christian faith²²⁸ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

In searching for a language pattern that would reflect the holistic intent of a knowing/desiring/doing that engages and shapes the whole 'being' of people as agent-subjects in the world, Groome used the word conation

²²⁷ Groome, pg 18

²²⁸ Groome, pg 22 - 25

instead of cognition. Groome explains that the word 'conation' described as the 'conscious drive to perform volitional acts' implied consciousness, desire, will and action. Thus, it is a desired learning outcome as its aim is the reflection and realising of Christian identity in the community. It then poses a pedagogical task of informing, forming and transforming people in living the Christian faith, in right relation with God, self, others and creation following Jesus. Therefore to disciple people in such a way should permeate the whole curriculum – its dynamics, content and environment. For those who find the word unusual, Groome suggests that the word wisdom can be used as a synonym for conation²²⁹ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

Thirdly, in explaining the concept of remembrance of being, Groome points out that the philosopher Martin Heidegger, whose area of interest was in ontology had accused Western philosophy of severing knowing from people's experience of being, epistemology from ontology and the 'knower' both from themselves and what is known. Heidegger had used the term 'forgetfulness of being' to describe this. To counter this concept of forgetfulness, Groome uses the term 'remembrance of being' to mean 'the activity of consciously bringing to 'mind' (engages reason, memory, and imagination) for understanding, judgement, and decision, all that arises from our whole being in the world'.²³⁰ He also argues that remembering is also to consider how our 'being' is shaped by our situation in time and place and that we have the responsibility as members to reshape our context not only for our own authentic existence but also for the well being of others and the world²³¹ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). Groome demonstrates how this can be done in his article, 'Remembering and Imagining' where he describes the influences on his life and work.²³²

²²⁹ Groome, pgs 27 - 30

²³⁰ Groome, pg 34

²³¹ Groome, pg 34

²³² Groome, Thomas *Remembering and Imagining*

Epistemology

Following on from Groome's remembrance of being, is his stance on epistemology for conation. Groome observed that although the dominant epistemological traditions in Western philosophy have shaped the church's praxis on faith education, none had provided an adequate foundation for a conative pedagogy mainly because of the separation from the theory and practice, the knower and the being. Although he notes that there is an epistemic shift in more contemporary traditions, he contends that there were assets and liabilities in all. While claiming that the Enlightenment had put an undue confidence in reason to solve all problems, he nevertheless affirmed the contributions made by the mind and critical rationality to Christian theology and religious education. He therefore stresses that education in Christian faith should build on the foundations of the past but that its pedagogy must help people to rise to Kant's challenge of the Enlightenment – 'dare to think'. He asserts that critical reasoning must be reunited with analytical remembering and creative imagining and the 'whole mind' in a pedagogy that honours and engages people's whole 'being'. He notes the dangers of technical rationality; which when applied to the study of scripture produces knowledge about the Bible and reflects a dichotomy between 'knowing' and 'being'. In contrast, a humanising rationality can also be academically rigorous as it employs the tools and criticisms of modern Bible scholarship. However, it enters a personal relationship with the text, engaging with it as a friend and having a self – investing dialogue with the text as a source of meaning and ethic for life²³³ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

Thus for Groome, the epistemological question at the foundation of the Christian education task is what does 'to know' mean, and in particular to know Christ.²³⁴ ('Shared Christian Praxis: A Possible Theory/Method of Religious Education' in Astley, Jeff and Francis, Leslie J (eds.) *Critical*

²³³ Groome, pgs 72 -82

²³⁴ Groome Thomas. 'Shared Christian praxis: a possible theory/method of religious education' pg 224

Perspectives on Christian Education). Groome points out that if our epistemology is one that sees knowledge as an intellectual attainment of the mind gained through reflection, Christianity will then be seen as lists of truths to be understood by the intellect. In proposing that Christian education should be done by a method of praxis, Groome rejects on grounds of control and productivity to our criteria, the technical praxis of people like James Michael Lee,²³⁵ (*The Content of Religious Instruction: A Social Science Approach*), who advocates manipulating variables in the classroom to produce the desired results. He also opposes the notion of hermeneutical praxis (enculturation or socialisation) recommended by people like John Westerhoff,²³⁶ (*Will Our Children Have Faith?*), as he perceives it as practical control which maintains the status quo and conditions students into accepting the religious culture²³⁷ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). He therefore advocates a critical praxis based on Habermas' idea of combining the technical and hermeneutical praxis while broadening the self reflection and action so that 'the interest that unites theory and practice specified as that which must become transparent to the knower if emancipation is to ensue'²³⁸ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

Shared Christian Praxis – The Approach

Describing it as a shared Christian praxis, Groome explains that it is an approach because it is not theory alone nor a method but a reflective mode of going about the historical task of religious education. He stated that it is shared because it is a reflection of the participative and dialogical style which engages people in a partnership of common discernment and decision making based on 'present praxis' and Christian Story/Vision. It is Christian because the story/vision of the Christian community over time is

²³⁵ Lee, James Michael *The Content of Religious Instruction: A Social Science Approach – 3rd Book Trilogy* (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press) 1985

²³⁶ Westerhoff, John H. 111 *Will Our Children Have Faith?*

²³⁷ Groome Thomas pg 225

²³⁸ Groome Thomas, pgs 223-224

made accessible to participants allowing them to appropriate it to their lives. It is praxis because it is grounded on a pedagogy that engages people about their reflection on their lives in the world. It is also based on the philosophical foundations that honours an 'epistemic ontology' and intends connation or wisdom²³⁹ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

The approach is based on a focussing activity and five movements. Groome emphasises that he prefers the term movement rather than stage as movement gives the impression of the orchestrated movements of a symphony or a dance. There is a logical sequence but they can overlap, recur and recombine in their sequences²⁴⁰ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). The focussing act is a generative theme or symbol agreed by the participants for the teaching and learning event.

The first movement is called Naming /Expressing Present Praxis. Having focussed on a generative theme, participants are encouraged to name or express in some way their present praxis through an engaging activity. The activity could express sentiments, attitudes, intuitions or feelings towards it and could be through dancing, miming, speaking, writing, symbolising. In the second movement, (Critical Reflection on Present Action), the participants are encouraged to reflect critically on what was expressed in Movement 1. They are encouraged to look at the reasons, assumptions; to appropriate critically present praxis in their time and place and to share metaphorically their own 'stories and visions'. In the third movement, (Making Accessible Christian Story and Vision) participants are then encouraged to consider an expression of Christian story and Vision which is appropriate to the generative theme or a symbol. The Story symbolises the faith life of the Christian community over history and in present as expressed through scripture, tradition, liturgy etc. Its Vision reflects the promises and demands that arise from the story to empower

²³⁹ Groome pg 133

²⁴⁰ Groome, pg 146

and mandate Christians to live now for the coming of God's reign for all creation²⁴¹ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

During the fourth Movement, (Dialectical Hermeneutic to Appropriate Christian Story/Vision to Participants' Stories and Visions) movements 1 & 2 (naming/expressing and critical understanding of expression) are brought together with Movement 3 (Christian Story/Vision) and are placed in dialectical hermeneutics. Two questions become important. These are 1. How does the Christian Story/Vision affirm, question and call us beyond our present praxis? 2. How does the present praxis affirm and critically appropriate the version accessible in Movements 3 & 4 and how are we to live faithfully toward the vision of God's reign? The dialectical hermeneutics between the two sources of Christian faith (conation/wisdom and present praxis and Christian Story/Vision) enable participants to appropriate the Story/Vision to their own life and contexts, to know it for themselves through judgment and thus to make it their own as agent subjects in the larger community and the world²⁴² (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

In Movement 5, participants are provided with the opportunity to make decisions about how to live the Christian faith in the world. This is in keeping with a holistic understanding of Christian faith and of conation or wisdom that engages people's whole being in place and time toward truth that is cognitive, relational and moral. The respondents choose their responses; these can be cognitive, affective or behavioural depending on the generative theme, symbol or context. They can also be at the personal, interpersonal or socio-political levels of their lives²⁴³ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

²⁴¹ Groome, pgs 146 - 147

²⁴² Groome, pg 147

²⁴³ Groome, pg 148

In summary, Groome claims that this approach not only narrows the gap between expressed faith and action, but through the use of the critical reflective movement, it is more likely than other epistemologies to enable people to be free to create their future with God. In addition, he posits that a praxis epistemology is more likely to facilitate the biblical concept of knowing (not just saying Lord but doing the will of the Father). He also argues, based on Gabriel Moran's idea, that revelation is an ongoing process and therefore critical reflection should begin in the present where God is actively revealing self. Finally, based on the liberating word and work of Christ, a praxis method of doing Christian education is more likely to respond to the emancipation aspects of Christianity than other epistemologies.

Critique and interrelation with Project

Like most theories, Groome's shared praxis approach has its strengths and weaknesses. I shall also consider these in relation to this project. The strengths will be presented first. These are its foundation in biblical principles and the wisdom tradition of the Christian faith, its application to everyday life and its critical stance which addresses problems in pedagogy. Firstly, a number of researchers including Noel Woodbridge,²⁴⁴ (*Review of Thomas Groome, Sharing Faith: The Way of Shared Praxis/ Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis, TH Groome: Book Review*), Dean Blevins,²⁴⁵ (*Formation and Discernment – A Wesleyan Dialogue Between Worship and Christian Education*) Gerry Reilly,²⁴⁶ (*Stirring the Human Heart: The Task of Religious Education*), Don Browning,²⁴⁷ (*Review: On Religious Education in a Pluralistic World*), and Miriam

²⁴⁴ Woodbridge, Noel B 'Review of Thomas Groome, Sharing Faith: The Way of Shared Praxis/ Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis, TH Groome: Book Review'. *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* 10 (2010): pgs115-132

²⁴⁵ Blevins, Dean *Worship: Formation and Discernment – A Wesleyan Dialogue Between Worship and Christian Education* Wesleyan Theological Journal March 1998 pgs 111 -127

²⁴⁶ Reilly, Gerry *Stirring the Human Heart: The Task of Religious Education* The Furrow, Vol.19, No. 3 (March, 1998)pgs 137 -142

²⁴⁷ Browning, Don *Review: On Religious Education in a Pluralistic World* The Journal of religion, Vol.62, No 4 (October 1992), pp.418 -424

Charter,²⁴⁸ (*Thomas H Groome's Shared Praxis Approach to Ministry: Questioning its Application in the Protestant Evangelical Church*), have commented on the strengths of Groome's model. Woodbridge has outlined the following strengths; it is based on the Bible and the wisdom tradition of the Bible; it emphasises the close connection between the Christian faith and practical everyday life, it stresses the practical outworking of the Christian faith in a specific context, it has had an impact on professional Christian education and its practicality makes it of keen interest to professional Christian educators²⁴⁹ (*Review of Thomas Groome, Sharing Faith: The Way of Shared Praxis/ Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis, TH Groome: Book Review*).

Due to the Biblical emphasis within the church, Groome's approach could be easily incorporated into a Pentecostal church. If Christian faith is to be formed, or as Groome asserts, if people are to be informed, formed and transformed, then it is important that Biblical principles are used. His idea of themes is helpful and they are more likely to engage the participants, especially when they are generated by them and related to their lives. However, there is also the possibility that the choosing of themes by participants could lead to familiarity with selected parts of the Bible only. It is likely that the use of themes could also make the story appear disjointed and thereby discounting the full process, (the full dynamics of Christian teaching and learning)²⁵⁰ (*Review of Thomas Groome, Sharing Faith: The Way of Shared Praxis/ Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis, T H Groome: Book Review*). On the positive side, it is possible to cover more of the Bible through themes but that would depend on a skilled facilitator to guide the participants. When children are involved, facilitating skills would be particularly essential when choosing a Story/Vision from the Christian tradition as they are unlikely to be familiar with the overall story. How then would children get a sense of the overall story? Vigilance would

²⁴⁸ Charter, Miriam *Thomas H Groome's shared Praxis Approach to Ministry*

²⁴⁹ Woodbridge, pgs 128 - 129

²⁵⁰ Woodbridge, pg 131

be needed when working with children and young people as those who work with children know how they often like the familiar. Thus, although the foundation is biblical, people could become 'top heavy' in certain areas and weak in others. The informing, forming and transforming might therefore not be as thorough as Groome would suggest.

Moreover, the pedagogical approach can be used across a number of denominational and cultural contexts as it engages people in critical dialogue about their faith. From a teaching perspective, Browning has also argued that in advocating that Christian religious education must be fully critical, 'Groome flies in the face of the purely confessional mentality of the average religious educator in both Protestant and Catholic circles'²⁵¹ (*Review: On Religious Education in a Pluralistic World*). He also asserts that Groome's theory is aimed at addressing 'the diverse and conflicting meaning, ideologies, and faiths of pluralistic modern societies'.²⁵² Charter posits that Groome has done a good service in attempting to address the problem in teaching; namely respecting the freedom of learners by involving them without indoctrinating or manipulating them²⁵³ (*Thomas H Groome's Shared Praxis Approach to Ministry: Questioning its Application in the Protestant Evangelical Church*). She asserts that his methodology has helped to overcome the parochialism and superficiality of current Christian education practice and added that he has contributed to the church through an expanded epistemology, a quest for practical theology and the involvement of the laity in education.²⁵⁴ Reilly explains that he finds the approach helpful in providing a framework 'that facilitates engagement of the heart'²⁵⁵ (*Stirring the Human Heart: The Task of Religious Education*). Thus if there is internal engagement, it is also likely that that this would be reflected externally.

Despite the above accolades, there are a number of weaknesses associated with Groome's model. These are its reliance on secular

²⁵¹ Browning, Don *Review: On Religious Education in a Pluralistic World* pg 421

²⁵² Browning, pg 421

²⁵³ Charter, pg 102

²⁵⁴ Charter, pgs 103 -104

²⁵⁵ Reilly, pg 140

philosophies, the selective use of scripture, the dialectical approach and its failure to pull out ethical principles. Firstly, Woodbridge has identified the following weaknesses. These are dependence on various secular philosophies, synthesis of diverse and sometimes contradictory sources of thought, and an imbalance between the personal, propositional and practical dimensions of Christian knowing and specific aspects.²⁵⁶ Woodbridge notes that the notion of dialectic which underpins Groome's praxis construct is eclectic. It is influenced both by Hegel and Heidegger. In his shared Christian praxis approach, Groome (also by his own admission) tries to have a balance between the critical stance of Marx, Habermas and Freire and the hermeneutical approach of Gadamer. Consequently, there is concern whether Groome has managed to synthesise the diverse and sometimes contradictory sources of thought²⁵⁷ (*Review of Thomas Groome, Sharing Faith: The Way of Shared Praxis/ Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis, T H Groome: Book Review*).

Don Browning points out that since dialectics for Groome means going through a process of affirmation, negation and then synthesis, one can assume that Groome expects the participant to find points of similarity, difference and to move towards a wider critical synthesis between present action and the story and vision of the Christian faith. He acknowledges that Groome does not say that this process will allow the Christian story to be surpassed but concludes that there are limitations to every version of the Story.²⁵⁸ Browning is critical of Groome for making what he calls a loose commitment to a revised correlation method without refining his methods thereby leaving it unclear how one makes the critical decision to avoid arbitrary subjectivism or confessionalism²⁵⁹ (*Review: On Religious Education in a Pluralistic World*). Similarly, Blevin also observes that most of Groome's work is focussed on critically investigating present experience and the critical dialogue between that experience and the Christian story.

²⁵⁶ Woodbridge, pgs 129 -131

²⁵⁷ Woodbridge, pgs 129 -130

²⁵⁸ Browning, pg 422

²⁵⁹ Browning pg 423

Therefore the final movement is lacking in detail on how to imagine an alternative future²⁶⁰ (*Stirring the Human Heart: The Task of Religious Education*). It is the lack of clarity in the final movements which present a problem for evangelical Christians. It is in these movements where participants can affirm, refuse or attempt to go beyond the text that is especially unacceptable for evangelical Christians who see the Bible as authoritative with the intention of challenging and transforming the people of God²⁶¹ (*Thomas H Groome's Shared Praxis Approach to Ministry: Questioning its Application in the Protestant Evangelical Church*). This would also be unacceptable within a Pentecostal context where the Bible is seen as authoritative.

Thus for the purposes of this project, the dialectic approach of trying to ascertain the truth by trying to synthesise two opposing positions is problematic in itself as the Biblical notion of truth is God's revelation in Christ Jesus. Although there are tensions within Christianity, and forces of good and evil which need to be acknowledged and addressed, this approach to truth, seems to be going against the concept of faith as a gift from God and revelation as a form of knowing. Therefore, although the critical approach of the model may be attractive, its foundation appears to be rather shaky and consequently, makes the model itself weak.

Moreover, it is not only the synthesis of different ideologies that is of concern but Groome's use of scripture. Charter argues that Groome is selective in his use of scripture in illustrating that the praxis approach is akin to the biblical way of knowing. She observes that he has selected scriptures that relate to keeping God's commandments but that he has omitted the Scriptures that show that there is a propositional content to Christian belief. Thus, she posits that Groome is afraid of absolutes which in turn lead to a non-propositional approach to truth and therefore according to Charter, is a faulty interpretation of Scripture²⁶² (*Thomas H Groome's Shared Praxis Approach to Ministry: Questioning its Application in the Protestant Evangelical Church*). Following on from this, Woodbridge

²⁶⁰ Reilley, pg 117

²⁶¹ Charter, pg 107

²⁶² Charter, pg 106 -107

cites Wallace (1995) who indicates that the critical emphasis is possibly endangering the balance 'between personal, propositional and practical dimensions of Christian knowing'²⁶³ (*Review of Thomas Groome, Sharing Faith: The Way of Shared Praxis/ Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis, TH Groome: Book Review*). Woodbridge reported that Wallace believes that a greater emphasis on prayer, meditation and liturgy would strengthen the practical dimension. However, it is possible that this area is left vague so that it could relate to different cultural and denominational expressions of practical knowing. Therefore, if aspects of this model were to be used, the Holiness/Pentecostal epistemology, traditions of prayer and liturgy would give a different emphasis on Christian knowing. (See Chapter 2 for an explanation of Pentecostal epistemology).

Lastly, Browning also accuses Groome of doing little to pull out the ethical principles within the Christian story, despite his interest in praxis and his concern with the kingdom of God. There is very little discussion of either how love or justice functions as an ethical principle or how they are defined differently and used in contemporary religious ethics²⁶⁴ (*Review: On Religious Education in a Pluralistic World*). The following aspects have also been identified as of concern; these are: the treatment of context is inadequate, his approach does not take full account of process (the full dynamics of Christian teaching and learning) and his notion of co-partners slights what Nels Ferre called 'God as educator' and 'learning from God'²⁶⁵ (*Review: On Religious Education in a Pluralistic World*).

Nevertheless, despite the foregoing criticisms the work of Groome is particularly useful within the context in which I am working. Groome's definition of faith as being a gift from God aligns with the Biblical view within the denomination. His definition of Christian education also correlates with my preferred definition of faith formation described in Chapter 1. Thus, Groome's work is Biblically based and aims to lead

²⁶³ Woodbridge, pg 130

²⁶⁴ Browning, pgs 423 - 424

²⁶⁵ Woodbridge, pg 131

people into a relationship with the Christian God who can not only transform their beings in relation to themselves and others but shape their character privately and publicly within their particular context. It is therefore pertinent to this work as I try to ascertain how this view of formation takes place within a Holiness/Pentecostal context.

Groome's praxis epistemological foundations are also important to this work as he questions the western view of what it means to 'know' and acknowledges the movement towards an epistemic ontology from other groups such as women and liberation groups who had been previously excluded from knowledge²⁶⁶ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). Groome is very critical of an approach that separates knowledge from the knower and leads to people knowing about God rather than knowing God. This view of knowledge and the praxis approach correlates well with a Pentecostal view of knowing God and of active participation in worship. Although his epistemological foundations have been considered weak by some of his critics, it would be possible to compare and contrast the praxis epistemology with a Pentecostal epistemology, along with the interviews to ascertain the contribution that Groome's work could make to the faith formation of children and young people in Holiness/Pentecostal churches.

Groome's methodology is particularly helpful when considering the work that I am investigating. A primary motivation for undertaking this area of research is the concern about children who appear to compartmentalise their lives into Christian and secular domains. Consequently, an approach which emphasises the close connection between the faith and everyday life of young people would be useful in considering their faith formation. Groome's notion of dialectical hermeneutics means that the participant is engaged in reflection on not just the Bible story but on their present situation and then encouraged to think about the future. In Movement 4, when considering the following crucial questions that enable the participants to move forward: (1. How does the Christian Story/Vision

²⁶⁶ Groome, pg 83

affirm, question and call us beyond our present praxis? 2. How does the present praxis affirm and critically appropriate the version accessible in Movements 3 & 4 and how are we to live faithfully toward the vision of God's reign?), it is evident that these are contextual questions to bridge the old and the new. This has to be one of the key attractions to engage participants.

Summary

Although based on a number of theories, the main weakness of the Shared Christian Praxis approach appears to be its epistemological foundation; the synthesis of apparently contradictory ideas from different philosophers. In its practical outworking, for both facilitator and participants, Groome's model offers a more participatory role than traditional methods. It is related to experience which supports the learning process. In fact, learning would be experiential so that participants are not just learning about a God who is distant and far removed but one who is very active in their lives and prompts them to action.

The context specific situation means that the old, but ever-new story can be relevant across situations. Woodbridge notes that using contemporary educational theory and practice, philosophy and theology, Groome has proposed a model 'that provides a means of readdressing an issue (question) that has re-emerged for every generation throughout the history of the Christian faith, namely: How is the faith to be given practical, tangible expression or what is appropriate praxis in the immediate cultural, social, philosophical and political environment?' ²⁶⁷ As the approach can be used across different contexts, I have no doubt that some aspects are suitable to my area of study which is within the context of a Black Holiness/Pentecostal denomination. Although Woodbridge,²⁶⁸ (*Review of Thomas Groome, Sharing Faith: The Way of Shared Praxis/ Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis, T H Groome: Book Review*) has criticised this area of Groome's work on the grounds that the treatment of

²⁶⁷ Woodbridge, pg 129

²⁶⁸ Woodbridge pg 131

context is inadequate, this may work in the favour of people who want to make the work context specific. However, Groome's idea while seemingly easy to implement is more problematic than at a first glance. It has been suggested by Fleischer,²⁶⁹ (*From Individual to Corporate Praxis: A Systemic Re-Imagining of Religious Education*), that although praxis methodologies are becoming the norm in adult education, the outcome can be individualistic. She notes that participants gather for reflection but then they are sent out in the world to carry out individual action. She contends that Christians are called to address complex issues which require models of communal or corporate praxis so that communities engage together in action as well as reflection.

Bearing in mind the context in which I am working, it would therefore be impossible to use Groome's approach on its own or together with the previous interlocutor to consider the faith formation of children and young people within COGIC. On that note, I shall turn to my final interlocutor for a different perspective.

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²⁶⁹ Fleischer, pg 316

Chapter 5- Anthony Reddie: Black Christian Education of Liberation

You will know the truth and the truth will make you free. (John 8:32 NLT)

The work of Anthony Reddie is different from that of the previous interlocutors, James Fowler and Thomas Groome, in that it is set within the British context and is focused specifically on the Christian education of Black children and young people. Nevertheless, some similarities in methodology can be found between Groome's and Reddie's work, as Reddie acknowledges the influence of Groome²⁷⁰ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Unlike Fowler and Groome, Reddie does not propose developmental stages or movements in the learning process but focuses on the translation of his ideas into practical curriculum materials for supporting faith formation.

Reddie describes himself as a Black liberation theologian and Christian educator. Born in Bradford of Jamaican parents, he was nurtured in the Wesleyan Methodist Tradition. He undertook his vocation as a Black liberation theologian and educator in Birmingham and has lived there for about thirty years²⁷¹ (*Living Out Faith: Black Christianity in Britain and Transformative Christian Education as a Riposte to the Historical Negation of Blackness*). Like Groome,²⁷² (*Remembering and Imagining*), he believes that there is a correlation between experiences and ensuing ideas and theories in later writing. Therefore, for Reddie, all knowledge and truth is contextual. He refers to his life being shaped through growing up in a Black Christian home while living within an area which was predominantly White working class, with strong support for both the trade union and the Labour party. Despite having a pleasant and affirming childhood, he observed the racism that affected the lives of all non-White people in Bradford²⁷³ (*Living Out Faith: Black Christianity in Britain and Transformative Christian Education as a Riposte to the Historical Negation*

²⁷⁰ Reddie, Anthony G. *Nobodies to Somebodies* pg 89

²⁷¹ Reddie, Anthony G. *Living Out Faith: Black Christianity in Britain and Transformative Christian Education as a Riposte to the Historical Negation of Blackness* Black Theology, Vol.11, no. 3, 2013, 342 -362, pg 344

²⁷² Groome, Thomas *Remembering and Imagining* pgs 511-520

²⁷³ Reddie, Anthony G. *Living Out Faith*: pg 344

of Blackness). By 2013, Reddie had written 11 books on Christian education and Black theology in Britain, 25 articles in peer review journals and 19 essays or chapters in books and is the editor of *Black Theology: An international Journal*²⁷⁴ (*Understanding and Teaching Black Theology*). Yet, there are very few critiques of his work. Writers who have engaged with his work have noted his contribution to Black Theology. In 2015, he was appointed as a professor in the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology at the University of South Africa.

Reddie's ground breaking work,²⁷⁵ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*), is important to the subject under investigation in that not only does it attempt to create a model for the Christian education of Black children in Britain but there are also curriculum materials which emerge from the model; *Growing into Hope Volumes 1 and 2*.²⁷⁶ Reddie's rationale for this work was his concern 'with the task of creating a new model or example of Christian education, which is informed by and reflects the needs of Black children and young people living in Britain'.²⁷⁷ Thus, he called his model a 'Black Christian education of liberation'.²⁷⁸ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*)

Initially, Reddie's interest lay in investigating the nurture and Christian education of Black British (with an African Caribbean background) young people in inner city churches in Birmingham. He explained that the project was 'initiated by the Division of Education and Youth of the Methodist Church and a number of other church denominations, principally the Anglican, Baptists and United Reformed Churches' ²⁷⁹ (*Towards a Black Christian Education of Liberation: The Christian Education of Black*

²⁷⁴ Reddie, Anthony G. *Understanding and Teaching Black Theology* Discourse Volume 8, No.2, pgs 49 -79

²⁷⁵ Reddie, Anthony G. *Nobodies to Somebodies*:

²⁷⁶ Reddie ,Anthony *Growing into Hope Vols. 1 & 2* Peterborough Methodist Publishing House (1998)

²⁷⁷ Reddie, Anthony G *Nobodies to Somebodies* pg 3

²⁷⁸ Reddie, pg 5

²⁷⁹ Reddie, Anthony *Towards a Black Christian Education of Liberation: The Christian Education of Black Children in Britain* *Black Theology in Britain: A Journal of Contextual Praxis*, Issue 1, 1998, pg 46

Children in Britain). Conducting his work as a participant observer/insider along an Action Research paradigm inside the historic denominations meant that he was in familiar settings; and even more so in the Methodist churches. Reddie did not include the Black-led Churches such as COGIC in his study because he argued that 'the commonality of issues in terms of dissatisfaction, overt and institutional racism, marginality of culture, and questions of identity are not shared to the same degree, as within churches of the historic tradition'²⁸⁰ (*Towards a Black Christian Education of Liberation: The Christian Education of Black Children in Britain*). Yet in explaining the rationale for his model Reddie maintains that 'there are and remain significant differences in how people with varied experiences, histories and cultures will express and gain meaning from what it means to be a follower of Christ'²⁸¹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). In comparing the religious experiences of African and Caribbean to European people, Reddie argues that 'there is a wide disparity between White European forms of worship and their accompanying cultures, and the linguistic traits and cultural forms of African and Caribbean people. This difference represents some of the inherent tensions between two vastly different worlds of religious experience'.²⁸² Thus, despite limiting his investigation to Black people in the historic churches, Reddie acknowledges a commonality in the experience and culture of Black Christians which manifests itself in different religious forms of worship from White Christians. This undoubtedly will influence the approach to Christian education and faith formation.

Reddie is quite critical of the role that the historic denominations played in the evangelization of Black people. He postulated that 'the exporting of such denominations as Anglicanism, Methodism, Presbyterianism and the Baptist traditions led to a cultural discord between White European norms and the belief system of Black slaves that were carried over from the

²⁸⁰ Ibid, pg 48

²⁸¹ Reddie, Anthony G *Nobodies to Somebodies* pg 69

²⁸² Reddie, *Nobodies to Somebodies* pg 18

continent of Africa²⁸³ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). He also argued that the endeavours of Western Missionaries in propagating the gospel, led to psychological damage of Black people; 'the deep-seated issues of anti-blackness, which has become exemplified in a form of non-contextualised, disembodied faith, have arisen from the collusion between oppressed Black bodies and White hegemonic power'²⁸⁴ (*Living Out Faith: Black Christianity in Britain and Transformative Christian Education as a Riposte to the Historical Negation of Blackness*). This is similar to Stewart's view of the role missionaries played in Caribbean Christianity mentioned in Chapter 1²⁸⁵ (*Three Eyes for the Journey – African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience*). Reddie therefore believes that white institutions are more entrenched and difficult environments for Black people to worship in and has therefore suggested that 'in the context of Black expression and identity the extremes of this critical struggle are to be found in the inhibited and repressed thinking and emotions of Black people within historic mainline traditions'²⁸⁶ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). However, he is equally critical of Black led churches for being 'wedded to a form of nineteenth-century White Evangelism'²⁸⁷ ('Re-Imagining, Re-Thinking and Re-Doing: Deconstructing our Biblical and Theological Perspectives on the Christian Nurture of Children' in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God*). The aim of his proposed model and the materials produced is to liberate Black Christians. He hopes that in seeking to liberate people in one context, it might be possible to gain useful insights for African and African-Caribbean people in other religious and cultural situations²⁸⁸ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Reddie believes that the curricular materials have an appeal to a wider audience of Black Majority Churches within the UK.

²⁸³ Ibid pg 6

²⁸⁴ Reddie, *Living Out Faith*, pg 345

²⁸⁵ Stewart, Dianne pg 83

²⁸⁶ Reddie, *Nobodies to Somebodies* pg 7

²⁸⁷ Reddie Anthony, 'Re-Imagining, Re-Thinking and Re-Doing: Deconstructing our Biblical and Theological Perspectives on the Christian Nurture of Children' in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God* pg 89

²⁸⁸ Reddie, Anthony G *Nobodies to Somebodies* pg 7

Premise

There is no doubt that Reddie's model is aimed, although not exclusively, at Christian formation of Black children and young people as he suggests that it is essential to create a new model of Christian education in order to provide an engagement for Christian formation²⁸⁹ (*Living Out Faith: Black Christianity in Britain and Transformative Christian Education as a Riposte to the Historical Negation of Blackness*). Reddie claims that his work is both educational and theological as it is a practical liberation of theology within the British context²⁹⁰ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). He asserts that his model of Black Christian education is a branch of practical theology and has an essential role in academic theology because of the following educational, theological and practical reasons. From an educational perspective, there is an emphasis upon the practical task of teaching and learning the Christian faith with a desire that people should be transformed and liberated by the gospel of Jesus Christ. From this process, he therefore hopes for the emergence of a model of learning which is liberating for Black people and he emphasizes the importance of arranging the educational processes around this aspect so that the learner is enabled to learn more about God. Next, the task is theological because its concern is with seeking to understand more about God, the Scriptures and the ongoing relationship between God and his people. Thus, it is seeking to produce a form of progression by which the Christian faith can be lived out with integrity and assurance. In using the term, a form of progression, Reddie appears to be hinting at faith formation. The final point illustrates both its theological and practical nature. For Reddie, it executes the ultimate aim of education in the creation of learning opportunities for Christian believers and those who have not been exposed to the gospel²⁹¹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

²⁸⁹ Reddie, *Living out Faith* pg 357

²⁹⁰ Reddie, pg 4

²⁹¹ Reddie, pgs 3 - 4

In using the term, Black Christian education of liberation, Reddie explains that the 'Black speaks to the prophetic, liberationist aspects which identify with the concerns of God's mission to the marginalized and oppressed as exemplified in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This prophetic stance is ideological because it asserts a particular and specific world-view. That world-view is shaped by a commitment to the Kingdom of God – the reversal of existing social norms. The term also reflects the cultural, social and historical experiences and expressions of faith of African peoples in the varied locations in which the Christian faith is practiced'²⁹² (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Reddie asserts that 'the development of Black Christian education is due to Black responses to racial oppression. Therefore, the main purpose of those who are involved in this is personal and corporate liberation.'²⁹³ To achieve this, he argues, an African - centred interpretative framework or hermeneutic for reading and re-reading Biblical texts is needed.²⁹⁴ Consequently, he is critical of any model of Christian education for Black people which relies on a colour blind theology that implies sameness or homogeneity between all people, the use of positive Black images in the teaching and learning scheme which leads to tokenism or colourization which is the attempt to include pictures of Black people after the text has been written or any scheme that does not include a liberationist approach²⁹⁵ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Reddie acknowledges that his work is influenced by Black and Womanist Theology and transformative education²⁹⁶ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). At the outset, he lists a number of American pioneers in both Black religious and secular education. One of these was Olivia Pearl Stokes,²⁹⁷ (*Education in the Black Church: Design for Change*), who advocated that the educational

²⁹² Reddie, pgs 38 -39

²⁹³ Reddie. Pg 38

²⁹⁴ Reddie pg 76

²⁹⁵ Reddie, pgs 69 -73

²⁹⁶ Reddie pg 3

²⁹⁷ Stokes, Olivia Pearl *Education in the Black Church: Design for Change* Religious Education: The Official Journal of the Religious Education Association, 69:4, 433 – 445 (1974)

programme in the Black Church use insights from Black theology to equip their leadership and their people for survival, transformation and to work with the church in its commitment to remedy some of the ills in society. The list also included James Cone,²⁹⁸ (*A Black Theology of Liberation*), whose writings have contributed to the development of Black theology and Cain Hope Felder,²⁹⁹ (*The Original African Heritage Study Bible: King James Version*) who edited the African Heritage Study Bible (AHSB). Black educators were Grant Shockley a Black Christian educator,³⁰⁰ ('From Emancipation to Transformation to Consummation: A Black Perspective' in Mayr, Marlene (ed.) *Does the Church Really Want Religious Education?: An Ecumenical Inquiry*), Janice Hale-Benson,³⁰¹ (*Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles*), an educator whose research not only challenged the Piagetian age stages but concluded that Black children in America were being failed by the educational system which did not take account of their learning styles and Jawanza Kunjufu,³⁰² (*Motivating and Preparing Black Youth to Work*), an educator among Black youth in America. Reddie also included Anne Wimberley,³⁰³ (*Soul Stories: African American Christian Education*) and Evelyn Parker,³⁰⁴ (*Trouble Don't Last Always: Emancipatory Hope among African American Adolescents*) who both use stories in their work with American youth.

²⁹⁸ Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Fortieth Anniversary Edition) (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books) 2010

²⁹⁹ Felder, Cain Hope *The Original African Heritage Study Bible: King James Version* (Nashville: The James C. Winston Publishing) 1997 8th edition first printed 1993

³⁰⁰ Shockley, Grant 'From Emancipation to Transformation to Consummation: A Black Perspective' in Mayr, Marlene (ed.) *Does the Church Really Want Religious Education?: An Ecumenical Inquiry* (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press) 1988

³⁰¹ Hale-Benson, Janice E. *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles* (Baltimore, USA: The Johns Hopkins University Press) 1986 Revised Edition first printed 1982

³⁰² Kunjufu, Jawanza *Motivating and Preparing Black Youth to Work* (Chicago, USA: African American Images) 1986

³⁰³ Wimberley, Anne E. *Soul Stories: African American Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press) 1994

³⁰⁴ Parker, Evelyn L. *Trouble Don't Last Always: Emancipatory Hope among African American Adolescents* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press) 2003

Curriculum Materials

The influence of Black Theology

Following on from the influential theories and people, Reddie describes in more detail how his approach has been translated into curriculum materials in Growing into Hope Volumes 1 and 2. Black theology, a branch of the wider family of theologies of liberation has been instrumental in shaping his work³⁰⁵ (*Understanding and Teaching Black Theology*). Cone, to whom Black theology owes much of its development, posits that Black theology is a response to the failure of white religionists to relate the gospel of Jesus to the pain of being Black in a white society³⁰⁶ (*A Black Theology of Liberation*). He argues that Black theology takes as its premise the idea that Christian theology is one of liberation as expressed in Jesus Christ who identified with the humiliated and the oppressed³⁰⁷ (*A Black Theology of Liberation*). Reddie expands on this, demonstrating the worldwide sphere of Black theology by postulating that 'Black theology can be broadly understood as the self conscious attempt to undertake rational and disciplined conversation about God and God's relationship to Black people in the world across time and space'³⁰⁸ (*Understanding and Teaching Black Theology*). From Cone's perspective, the sources of Black theology are: Black experience, Black history, Black culture, revelation, Scripture and tradition³⁰⁹ (*A Black Theology of Liberation*). While acknowledging the influence from other sources on practical activities/games and Paulo Freire's idea of conscientization on his work, Reddie claims that there were two major ways in which Black theology influenced his work; these were in content and teaching strategy³¹⁰ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

³⁰⁵ Reddie, Anthony G. *Understanding and Teaching Black Theology* Discourse Volume 8, No. 2, pgs 49 -79, pg 50

³⁰⁶ Cone, pg 5

³⁰⁷ Cone, pg 1

³⁰⁸ Reddie, Anthony G. *Understanding and Teaching Black Theology* Discourse, pg 49

³⁰⁹ Cone, 24 -36

³¹⁰ Reddie, pg 75

In terms of content, three elements were identified; contextualization, incorporating Black language styles and story-telling. Firstly, the main resource for the content of the curriculum was looking at Biblical texts again for re-contextualization; i.e. the process of rereading and reinterpreting Biblical texts for different contexts. This was particularly influenced by Felder and the African Heritage Study Bible (AHSB). The introduction to this Bible notes that ‘the purpose of the Original African Heritage Study Bible is to interpret the Bible as it relates specifically to persons of African descent and thereby to foster an appreciation of the multiculturalism inherent in the Bible’³¹¹ (*The Original African Heritage Study Bible: King James Version*). For Reddie, recognizing from the AHSB that John the Baptist was an Afro-Asiatic man encouraged him to use the figures of John the Baptist and more contemporary Black heroes in his curriculum materials to describe the principles by which Black people have been able to surmount oppressive conditions³¹² (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Secondly, recognizing the need for young people to engage with the Biblical texts and to have their experience validated within the texts, Reddie also revisited Biblical passages to incorporate their language styles. He therefore rewrote the Pentecostal narrative of his curriculum materials using Jamaican Creole and elements of Black vernacular and speech patterns familiar to Black youth. He acknowledged the influence of other researchers who had done some similar work with Black youth in America noting the claim of Earl Beckles that Black speech patterns and dialects are components of Black identity and also infer meaning, relatedness and affirmation. He also cited Carl Tomlin who suggested that failure to incorporate ‘Black English’ into the teaching and learning process leads to a loss of self-esteem and confidence among Black youth³¹³ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

³¹¹ Felder, pg v

³¹² Reddie, pgs 75 - 77

³¹³ Reddie pg 77 -78

Thirdly, Reddie recounts how the story telling element was influenced by the recognition that the development of Black Christianity in North America, which began during slavery, owed its development to the process of oral transmission. Faith was nurtured and formed through each generation learning the stories from their elders in a similar fashion to the tradition around the development of Bible stories. In creating material that linked to the story telling element of Black people's lives within the Diaspora, Reddie therefore 'used the notion of intergenerational storytelling in the Black community to link Psalm 137 to the Black experience of 'exile' and migration'³¹⁴ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Reddie also cites the work of Wimberley and Parker whose work dovetails with his. A central theme in Wimberley's work is story linking. Wimberley describes it as 'a process whereby persons connect components of their everyday life stories with the Christian faith story found in scripture.... This linkage helps persons to discern the liberating activity of God and God's call to vocation – living in the image of Christ- in both biblical and present times'³¹⁵ (*Soul Stories: African American Christian Education*). Evelyn Parker uses personal and archetypal stories to enable Black youth to find out about liberation³¹⁶ (*Trouble Don't Last Always: Emancipatory Hope among African American Adolescents*). Reddie has developed this work further in his book, *Faith, Stories and the Experience of Black Elders*.³¹⁷

There were two aspects to the teaching strategy; the interaction of Black Church worship and the use of themes. The interaction of Black Church Worship and experience, advocated in the writings of Grant Shockley, is one of the hallmarks of the teaching strategy. Shockley advocates that a main objective of education in Black churches should be 'the development in Black persons of an authentic awareness of self identity, self determination and self direction'³¹⁸ ('From Emancipation to Transformation

³¹⁴ Reddie pg 80

³¹⁵ Wimberley, pg 13

³¹⁶ Parker, *Trouble Don't Last Always*:

³¹⁷ Anthony G Reddie *Faith, Stories and the Experience of Black Elders :Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2001)

³¹⁸ Shockley, pg 246

to consummation: A Black Perspective' in Mayr, Marlene (ed.) *Does the Church Really Want Religious Education? An Ecumenical Inquiry*). Reddie also contends in another paper that 'Christian education directed towards people of African descent must assert the importance of self-esteem; namely, the desire to see Blackness as divinely sanctioned and a part of the very hermeneutical framework for the assumption for the correction of the Black self'³¹⁹ (*Living Out Faith: Black Christianity in Britain and Transformative Christian Education as a Riposte to the Historical Negation of Blackness*). Reddie explained that Shockley emphasizes the dynamism of Black Church worship and how this interacts with an experience to create the raw materials for liberation. Under the theme, 'All Together', Reddie wrote a section for the first Sunday after Pentecost to 'highlight the importance of community, interdependence and the communitarian ethic amongst Black people'³²⁰ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Reddie emphasized that it was the corporate oneness, inspired by the Spirit of God, manifesting itself in collective response which was the antidote in the struggle in surmounting oppressive situations.

The teaching strategy of Reddie's curricula material found in the two books (*Growing into Hope Volumes 1 and 2*) is based on a thematic approach because of Reddie's commitment to Black theology which employs this methodology as a means of liberating people from their oppressive situations. However, Reddie also acknowledged the influence of Groome whose shared praxis approach involves generative themes. Nevertheless, his choice of themes was influenced by Black and Womanist theology and Black theologians³²¹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Reddie cited the influence of Joseph Crocket who not only approaches the Bible from a Black perspective but also uses themes from Scripture that reflect the post slavery experience of African Americans. Some of Reddie's themes

³¹⁹ Reddie, *Living Out Faith* pg 361

³²⁰ Reddie pg 79

³²¹ Reddie, pg 93

include hope, heroes, wisdom and change ³²² (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

The influence of Transformative Education and Liberation Theology

In creating the programme, Reddie reported that he needed to align Black theology with transformative education in order to turn theoretical ideas into practical teaching and learning materials³²³ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). In this, very similar to Groome, he was influenced by Paulo Freire's work in empowering illiterate oppressed people in Brazil by a process of 'conscientization'. Freire is opposed to the banking methods of education (hierarchical top down methods where the learner is passive in the teaching process) as they reinforce the imbalance between the oppressed and the oppressor³²⁴ (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*). With the intention of producing materials so that Black youth could learn about their history and make a link between the past and present situations, Reddie therefore adopted an approach which placed historical analysis alongside contemporary situations. This strategy is seen in the section on 'Obedience and Responsibility' designed for the fourth week in Advent.

Freire's influence is also seen in Reddie's use of transformative education which aims to change the relationship between the self, external knowledge and the wider society. Reddie acknowledges the work of Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, ³²⁵ (*Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers*), who developed teaching models based on Freire's concept of praxis to raise the critical awareness and knowledge of disempowered African people in South Africa. They created a series of reflective and action based exercises and games to elicit critical responses from the participants. Reddie therefore used their model to create a praxis (action and reflection) model of education to engage Black

³²² Reddie, pg 93

³²³ Reddie pgs 92 - 93

³²⁴ Freire, pgs 54 - 62

³²⁵ Hope, Anne and Timmel Sally *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers* (Rugby, England: Intermediate Technology Publications) 2007 5th edition first printed 1999

youth. He also noted that Hope and Timmel had moved beyond Freire into a practical teaching strategy for change³²⁶ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Despite Freire's influence, Reddie is critical of his model for lacking a coherent theological rationale. Reddie argued that Freire's model provides an ideological teaching strategy for the task of educating marginalized and oppressed peoples but the idea of the God of love being involved in their lives is not explicit in Freire's work. Agreeing with Grant Shockley's idea that Black theology is the source of Christian education and arguing that self definition is important, Reddie highlighted this in the materials for week 1 in Advent through an exercise which portrayed how oppressed and marginalized people have their world defined for them³²⁷ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Similar to how Black theology was a response to white racism, liberation theology, influenced by Freire and the concept of praxis (reflection and action) in terms of nurturing critical thinking and understanding was developed in South America among the poor as a reaction to injustice and oppression. This has also influenced Reddie's work. A key idea in liberation theology is that the kingdom of God is an upside down kingdom of the traditional values; domination by global capitalism and White western power and influence³²⁸ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Thus the mantra of liberation theology is that the Church should champion the cause of the poor in order to effect change and bring about social justice. Reddie acknowledges in particular the work of Daniel S Schipani (who draws on the work of Gustavo Gutierrez) and Frank Marangos. According to Reddie, Schipani seeks to bring the main ideas of liberation theology into the educational process advocating that liberation theology is central to Christian education in guiding the process of search for relevance and ownership for oppressed and marginalized peoples. From Reddie's perspective, Marangos argues that the gospel gives hope to those who

³²⁶ Reddie pg 86

³²⁷ Reddie pg 86 -87

³²⁸ Reddie, pgs 87 -88

are denied it by the world's system and that liberation theology places eschatological hope at the centre of Christian education. Thus, when informed by the ideas of liberation theology, Christian education possesses an ideological intent which distrusts the common assumptions about the ills of the world and envisages a radically new and different creation. Reddie explained that Marangos also contends that authentic change cannot emerge without praxis ³²⁹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Using Groome's idea of making the Christian story their own, Reddie therefore created some training exercises to help 'adult leaders to understand and visualize some of the philosophical, psychological and socio-cultural issues involved in the Christian education of Black youth' ³³⁰ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). In the introduction to Volume 2 of Growing into Hope, the exercise 'Are we in the story' is intended to help leaders understand the negative condition of self denial in African people which has developed over five hundred years. This self denial, according to Reddie, is usually manifested through the inability to assert their own worth or to see themselves positively in popular stories myths or historical events. The aim of this is to enable oppressed people to use the story/vision for their ultimate liberation. The gospel is therefore expressed through a specific culture (located in a specific period of time). This includes resetting of the sacred narrative, bringing the story to life and then localising the story/vision. Examples where Reddie has done this to enable Black youth to make the Christian gospel their own can be found in the section on Pentecost Sunday in the material for the middle and oldest groups³³¹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Along with transformative education, Reddie also acknowledges the work of others who use games and practical activities to facilitate change. For example, Berryman and his idea of Godly Play also contributed to

³²⁹ Reddie, pg 88

³³⁰ Reddie, pg 89

³³¹ Reddie pgs 89 -90

Reddie's thinking. Reddie explains that Berryman recognizes that games have their own rules and internal logic. His use of games is due to the influence of Piaget, Kohlberg and Erikson and their ideas on developmental psychology. In particular, he takes on board Piagetian ideas that children need symbols, images and other forms of concrete stimuli in the early years of their development. In keeping with Berryman's ideas, Reddie used the transformation of an everyday object (dough) in baking to demonstrate the work of the Holy Spirit³³² (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Issues and themes arising from the Pilot

There are a number of issues which Reddie encountered in piloting his materials. These were the extremes between principle and pragmatism, the identification of self, the impact of the materials as a resource for self-esteem and being and belonging in church, developing Black leadership through intergenerational worship and learning, a theology of good intentions and recollection and repetition. These will be discussed respectively.

Recognizing that many of the adult leaders who were going to teach the material were White, that some of the Black leaders also asserted European culture and desiring to engage Black youth, Reddie was faced with the extremes of principle and pragmatism³³³ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). He records that he needed to stick to the principles so that the material could keep its integrity while being realistic so that it could be used. He argued that he could not afford to alienate the Black group of leaders who had an influence on the attendance of Black youth with 'a very radical and overtly political Christian education curriculum'³³⁴ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

In addition, Reddie observed that during the piloting process, he discovered that Black Youth found it difficult 'to construct positive,

³³² Reddie, pg 94

³³³ Reddie pg 91

³³⁴ Reddie pg 91

reflective images of self from what might be described as traditional, White dominated Christian education material'.³³⁵ They needed African-centred stimuli or cultural frames of reference to think of Biblical characters in non-white European terms. He went on to explain that 'White European constructs (or constructed ideas and understanding) are pervasive within historic mainline churches'.³³⁶ The power of this, Reddie claims, prevents these youths from thinking in terms of sociocultural and family-based images which were part of their identity. Reddie pointed out that in order to counter this, the Black young people needed 'additional educational and theological interventions that would assure them that it was acceptable to be 'Black, or to be even more stark, 'non-White'.³³⁷ Reddie claims that his materials 'Growing into Hope' did just that³³⁸ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Moreover, there were two positive outcomes with the use of the materials. These were a) they were a resource for self-esteem and b) they could be used to develop a sense of being and belonging in church. Firstly, recognizing that the influence of White Eurocentric power and imagery leads Black children and young people to internalize negative views of self, Reddie argues that Christian education is important in correcting the ongoing and psychological denial of the Black self. He explains that this love of self can be fostered by reminding the youth that they are created in God's image and that he loves them³³⁹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Secondly, in attempting to develop a sense of being and belonging in church, the methodology was crucial, i.e. interactive, dialogical and African centred. Reddie noted that it enlivened the usual process of Christian education in church. He highlighted the views of one of the participants who had found coming to church more enjoyable since he had become involved in the study. Reddie also pointed to examples of improved practice in one particular church which had subsequently held Caribbean evenings and where Black youth

³³⁵ Reddie pg 144

³³⁶ Reddie pg 144

³³⁷ Reddie, pg 145

³³⁸ Reddie pg 145

³³⁹ Reddie, pg 145

were beginning to be incorporated into the life of the church. Reddie commended the church for 'beginning to make the transition from a body that is governed solely by overarching Eurocentric norms to a community that appreciates the importance of Black cultural experiences and expressions of faith'.³⁴⁰ Reddie also reported positive reaction from Black youth to the materials. He noted that 'the affirmation, self-esteem and sense of belonging conferred upon Black youth when they are given opportunities to play significant parts within the whole worshipping life of the church cannot be overstated'.³⁴¹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Furthermore, in the process of piloting the materials, Reddie recognized the need for Black youth to be involved in leadership. He purports that providing early opportunities for leadership can instil a sense of affirmation and self-esteem. This can be facilitated through exposure to worship with peers and elders. He believes that empowering Black youth will enable them to move from the marginalized areas of Sunday school and Junior Church into the heart of the worshipping community. Increased participation will lead to confidence and skills to confront racism in church and wider society.³⁴² (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Lastly, discussion with Black youth about the inability of the church and society to change led to Reddie's development of a theory which he called 'a theology of good intentions'. He described it as 'a way of responding to the oppressed and powerless, by refusing to take the experiences or perspectives of these people seriously. Rather than deal with the reasons for their actions, they are content to settle for the type of rhetoric that claims 'I didn't mean it, I am sorry....No one has ever meant to cause offence. It is always an accident. The intentions of the people who issue the apology cannot be challenged. In fact, their intentions are *always* good'.³⁴³ He then points out a number of associated concepts. These

³⁴⁰ Reddie pgs 148 -149

³⁴¹ Reddie, pg 150

³⁴² Reddie pgs 151 -152

³⁴³ Reddie, pg 154

include a particular way of reading the Bible which creates a dichotomy between the God of the Old Testament and that of the New so that the liberating aspect of the gospel is not realized. There is also the idea of identifying with a Jesus that is gentle, meek and mild and is not linked to the God of the Old Testament. It reverses the natural relationship between the offender and offended so that the relationship between power, injustice and oppression is not acknowledged and the offended is seen as the problem. There is the notion of sorrow rather than repentance so that conditions such as oppression and marginalization are not challenged³⁴⁴ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

According to Reddie, the strategies to overcome these involve Black support and empowerment groups within the historic mainline churches. Furthermore strategies such as dialogue and theological reflection coming from transformative education are important. 'This approach is one that incorporates critical reflection upon experience, linked to a Black interpretive approach to reading the Bible (a Black hermeneutic)' ³⁴⁵ This includes the process of situational analysis where Black young people can be encouraged to analyse their lives and the context in which they live and then interrogate their present experience for its truthfulness. Reddie claims that critical reflection can assist young people to negotiate between inactivity and resorting to violence. He suggests that young people need 'safe spaces' to learn, rehearse and practice these processes so that they can use them when situations arise. He acknowledges the importance of Black majority churches both in America and Britain and supplementary schools in facilitating this process ³⁴⁶ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Reddie also cites Romney Moseley who suggests that recollection and repetition are twin modes of critical thinking framed in a unitary struggle. This is to allow the self to remember the past and then to replay the moment to remake and refashion it in the here and now. He cites a

³⁴⁴ Reddie pgs 155 - 159

³⁴⁵ Reddie pg 167

³⁴⁶ Reddie pgs 168 -169

number of scholars who have worked with the notion of recollection and repetition including Anne Wimberley and Evelyn Parker³⁴⁷ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Critique and Interrelation with Project

That Reddie's work is of interest to people, is conveyed by the acknowledgements that Reddie receives as being a leading theologian in the field of Black Theology in the United Kingdom and the professorship conferred on him by the University of South Africa. In the absence of a critical appraisal of his work, I will attempt to evaluate Reddie's work and to demonstrate how it relates to this project.

At the outset, Reddie claimed that his work was educational and theological and a practical liberation of Black Christians within the British context, with the anticipation that success in one place would lead to insights for liberation in another. There is no doubt that Reddie has drawn from a number of sources, which he acknowledges within his work. However, he has not claimed to attempt to integrate these into an epistemological position. He has not suggested that he was trying to synthesize different competing theories, but he has used an eclectic approach, focussing on Black theology for content and teaching strategies but also using theoretical concepts from other traditions where they overlap with his aims or to enhance the teaching strategies. In so doing, he has managed to produce learning materials around the church's liturgical year for Black children and young people. In providing materials which are contextually and culturally relevant, he aims to support the faith formation of the children and young people. Furthermore, his analysis of the materials after the pilot supports his thesis that they were a resource for self esteem and that they could be used to develop a sense of being and belonging in church. Therefore, Reddie's innovative work, based on a thorough research in liberation and Black theology, will be useful for Black young people in Britain.

³⁴⁷ Reddie pgs 169 -170

Reddie's proposal works well in that his methods, the use of Black Womanist, transformative and Black theology are consistent with his aims. There is an emphasis on transformative education, a theological reflection approach that incorporates critical reflection on experience which is linked to a Black interpretative approach to reading the bible (a Black hermeneutic). Thus while Black theology provides the liberation ideas of the approach, the praxis approach and transformative education support the process of change. The process of change is facilitated by the praxis method of Thomas Groome in using themes and in making the story accessible by involving people in their own learning. Unlike Groome, he cannot be charged with leaving the story open ended, but through transformative education techniques of games and exercises has aimed for a definite outcome; the progression by which the Christian faith can be lived out with integrity and assurance. The participant is not encouraged to consider an alternative ending to the story (as Groome has been critiqued for) but rather for liberation from the psychological damage of anti-blackness to love themselves as Black Christians created in the image of God and to find their God given purpose in this world. In so doing, Reddie has demonstrated that he is not just interested in theoretical ideas but in practical solutions to real problems. Whilst stipulating that the main contribution was from Womanist, Transformative and Black theology, Reddie also acknowledges the influence of a number of other sources; among them, liberation theology, psychology and education.

Yet it is the same eclectic approach that weakens the model. Reddie has not fused these ideas together. There is no strong epistemological foundation and perhaps, Reddie may have deliberately avoided this. Instead, he has presented a list of strategies based on different approaches. Therefore for some themes, re-contextualization is important; for some it is the story element, yet other topics will use the games and exercises from transformative education. Undoubtedly, as acknowledged by Reddie some churches have benefitted from using the model. Therefore while the strategies are all useful in themselves, there is no central approach underpinning all the curriculum activities. It is therefore

possible that this lack of cohesion could be responsible for some of the participating churches in the initial project going back to business as usual³⁴⁸ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Reddie has already identified the need for training in order for this approach to be successful. Whilst recognizing the reluctance to change on the part of some people, is it possible that some churches could not see a strong rationale for the project and therefore reverted back to their old ways?

Reddie admits that when he first started he thought that the job 'was exclusively concerned with helping and assisting children in their Christian formation, faith development and cultural identity'³⁴⁹ (*Towards a Black Christian Education of Liberation: The Christian Education of Black Children in Britain*). However, Reddie does not seem to place much emphasis on the processes through which faith is formed. Although his aim is progression by which the Christian faith can be lived out with integrity and assurance, it is not clear whether this change occurs in stages or whether he has accepted a wide age range in which this happens. Nevertheless, change takes place through the different exercises and Reddie has recognised the different needs of children and young people as he has adapted his materials for different age groups.

As stated in Chapter 1, an aspect of Christian education is faith formation. My preferred definition, of Christian education is 'the processes which people learn to become Christian and more Christian'³⁵⁰ ('Definitions, Aims and Approaches: An Overview' in Astley, Jeff and Francis, Leslie (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education: A Reader in the Aims, Principles and Philosophy of Christian Education*). This is also used by Reddie,³⁵¹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). However, in trying to produce a curriculum it is possible that the processes of becoming more Christian were marginalized and not clarified. Reddie outlined his view of Black Christian education and the

³⁴⁸ Reddie, pg 150

³⁴⁹ Reddie, Anthony *Towards a Black Christian Education of Liberation*: pg 50

³⁵⁰ (Astley, 1994) pg 3

³⁵¹ Reddie, pg 13

influences of Black and Womanist and Transformative education and then arranged a curriculum that would help Black youth engage with the materials. In doing so, they could definitely become more Christian but the processes by which they would progress in their faith are not identified. However, Reddie acknowledges that it is not an ideal but an experimental model. Reddie stated that '*Growing into Hope* does not purport to be the ideal model or example for the Christian education of Black young people or adults...My knowledge of Black youth, and the insecurity and inhibitions of the adult leaders and the guardians who support these individuals in their Christian nurture, affected the writing of this experimental material'³⁵² (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). He noted the need to have a balance between pragmatism and idealism and that obviously affected the curricula materials.

As the work of Reddie is considered in relation to this research, some of the foregoing will be acknowledged. Although it is anticipated that the results will be useful to COGIC, the project is smaller than that of Reddie's; and not backed by any particular church, including my own. Unlike Reddie, engagement is not directly with children and young people but with adults who have grown in faith through the church and who can now articulate the factors that have supported their faith formation.

Reddie's model is pertinent especially in considering the faith formation of children within COGIC. That there was published research on Black Christian education in Britain was an attraction in itself to Reddie's model. The title of the model sounded like an innovative and original approach to the Christian education of Black young people and it was envisaged that there might be some elements of Black and Liberation theology. As I was working within a Black constituency, COGIC, I had deliberated whether the subject of Black theology could contribute to the faith formation of children and young people within this denomination. An important consideration therefore would be the basis on which Reddie conducted his research and the principles on which the model was based.

³⁵² Reddie pg 92

Similar to Reddie, I am a subjective insider as the particular church tradition in which I based my investigation of faith formation is a familiar setting to me. However, while Reddie's work is within the historic organizations, the setting for my research is in one of the newer 'Black Majority' churches in Britain. As COGIC is a Pentecostal Church with roots in the Holiness movement, one could argue that the holiness part of Holiness/Pentecostal churches may be associated with Methodism or anti-Methodism. However, the Pentecostal experience with its emphasis on distinctive expressions of faith is far different from that of John Wesley's Methodism or its modern counterpart. Furthermore, Pentecostalism originated with Black Christians in North America and initially included the cultural expressions of former African slaves. Nevertheless, the children and young people whose faith formation is under investigation share a similar ethnicity to those researched by Reddie in that they are Black and in particular, exclusively from an African Caribbean background. Reddie did not include the newer Black churches such as COGIC in his survey because he purported that they do not face the same degree of racism within their churches. Hence, whilst agreeing with Reddie that young people within Black-led Churches do not face those issues associated with racism, it is the commonality of experience and cultural contexts which makes his work relevant to this study. Although the subject of racism may not be an issue in church, it is likely to be a common experience outside of church. Reddie himself refers to the 'sense of detachment and exclusion that has been keenly experienced by many Black people in Britain'³⁵³ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Therefore, since the Christian life is not confined to the four walls of the church, perhaps the principles described by Reddie could be useful in supporting the faith formation of children and young people within COGIC. Whilst recognizing that Anthony Reddie's research was conducted in different church and theological traditions, perhaps his work could nevertheless illuminate the investigation into faith formation within a Holiness Pentecostal church. On the one hand, contextually, Reddie's

³⁵³ Reddie, Anthony G *Nobodies to Somebodies* pg 26

work is relevant because of the participants and the British setting but it does not address the Pentecostal experience.

The curriculum materials are based around the church's liturgical year. These are more likely to appeal to the historic churches than to churches within the Holiness/Pentecostal tradition. Volume 1 focuses on Advent. There are 4 lessons on Advent, 1 on Christmas Day, 1 on Covenant and 1 on Harvest. The material for each session is divided into younger, young, middle and older. Only the session on Christmas Day and Covenant would appeal as most Holiness/Pentecostal churches, while acknowledging the Christian Calendar, do not follow it in the same way as the historic churches. The focus of the second volume is Pentecost. At a glance, one would assume that this may appeal to the Holiness/Pentecostal Churches. However, the sessions are Lent and Easter Introduction, Mothering Sunday, Passion Sunday, Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost Introduction, Pentecost Sunday and Sunday after Pentecost. There is much to commend in the arrangement of materials, exercises and the positive images of Black people found in the appendixes. Skilled practitioners could learn from the teaching strategies and use them in the delivery of their Christian education programmes but it is doubtful that churches which do not follow a strict liturgical calendar would spend the time and effort to try and adapt them. However, there are areas such as the themes of hope and the teaching strategy in which this seminal work by Anthony Reddie can be useful for those interested in the Christian education of Black people.

One of the aims of Reddie's project was to produce curricula materials for the Black children and young people within the historic churches. Although Black children and young people within Black Led Churches were absent from the study, Reddie believes that the materials have an appeal to a wider audience of Black Majority Churches within the UK. While this may be the case, as Black Majority Churches cover a range of theological stances, the different approaches to liturgy within Holiness Pentecostal churches might mean that the curricula materials could be considered at a cursory glance to be irrelevant. However, if the user is prepared to go

below the surface, with adaptation and creativity, they could appeal to churches within the Holiness Pentecostal tradition. Nevertheless, the foundational basis in Christian education and the themes emerging from the work of Anthony Reddie could be valuable when considering Black faith formation in Holiness Pentecostal Churches.

Summary

Reddie's investigation into the Christian education of young people in the historic churches led him to develop a Black Christian education of liberation. It is based on Black theology, Liberation theology and transformative education. From Black Theology comes the idea of a black hermeneutic, re-contextualization, using the language styles of young people storytelling, the interaction of Black worship and experience and the use of themes. From Liberation theology, comes the notion of a praxis approach and from transformative education the strategies of dialogue and theological reflection through games and reflective exercises to change the relationship between the self, external knowledge and the wider society. Reddie acknowledged a number of pioneers who influenced his thinking. He demonstrated how some of these ideas were fused together in his curriculum materials and outlines some of the issues faced in piloting his model.

Finally, like Reddie's work, this project also fits into the domain of Practical Theology in that it investigates how faith is formed within a specific context. As such, it examines the teaching and learning processes that support faith formation within COGIC. It is hoped that the results will begin the process of investigating a model that will support children and young people within COGIC in their faith formation and that it will be useful to those in churches in similar denominations. Whilst I am seeking to make an investigation of faith formation within COGIC to be contextual and culturally relevant, I make no claim for its ability to liberate people all over the world. However, if liberation is seen, as Reddie explains, as identifying with the concerns of God's mission to the marginalized and oppressed as exemplified in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, then it would

be liberating to people within COGIC and similar organizations who are not considered to be part of the historic mainline churches and who face discrimination and oppression in their lives.

In respect of this aspect of liberation, it is also important to hear the voices of the people. Thus, before drawing together the theoretical concepts of all the interlocutors, the contributions of some people are offered.

Chapter 6 - Starting the Spiritual Journey

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3: 18 (AKJV)

In addition to the theoretical perspective provided by Fowler, Groome and Reddie, the perceptions of a limited number of COGIC members were ascertained in order to compare and contrast their experiences with the research literature. The responses from such a small number cannot be generalised across COGIC but their reflections are nevertheless useful in providing a valuable voice about the factors that supported their faith formation. The interview schedule (Appendix 1) has already been described) under the Methodology section along with the method of data analysis (Thematic Analysis: Appendices 4, 4.and 6 gives examples of how this was achieved). Although some attempt will be made to record some of the responses from the 10 sections of the interview schedule, the data has been analysed to reflect the themes arising from the interviews.

Background of Participants

The 10 participants, 6 males and 4 females were selected from those who volunteered and covered a spectrum of ages and roles within COGIC. The females ranged in age from 21 to over 55 and the males from 22 to over 55. None were over the age of 60. Most of the females were in the younger age group, while the males were older. The age range of participants meant that it was possible to deduce from their responses how changes had taken place over the years in regards to implementing systems to support people in their faith formation. For example, while some of the older participants reported having no formal pre-baptism classes, the younger members revealed that these were now in operation.

All the participants are familiar with COGIC. Ostensibly, 7 of them can be described as 'COGIC babies' in that their parents were already active members of the church when they were born. Of the other 3, 1 was part of COGIC at birth but his parents left and returned when he was about 11, one came from Jamaica at the age of 9 and the other transferred from

another church at the age of 11. These three participants are now in their 50s and had therefore spent their formative years within the church.

First Steps on the Spiritual Journey

The themes under this heading are taken from Section 2 which attempted to identify the embryonic stages of faith formation. Thus participants were invited to relate the age at which they started to attend activities in COGIC and to describe their earliest memories of church. Themes emerging from this section included: positive experiences in the early years, being engaged in meaningful activities and tasks, having a sense of belonging before they became church members, being raised as a member of a church 'family', having influential adults around them who could support them through the questioning and reflective phase until they transitioned to making their commitment to Christ and to the church.

The participants were asked to recall their earliest memories of church. They responded with enthusiasm identifying not only the activities but positive experiences associated with the activities in which they were engaged. The choir seemed to be especially important to some participants. Three of them referred to singing in the Children's choir with two of them recounting experiences when they were under the age of five. These two participants are now lead singers and assisting choir directors both within their local churches and at national level. It is worth noting that being part of the COGIC choir would have been an aspiration for children and young people as it paved the way for future Black gospel choirs, being the first to appear on national television during the early eighties, singing at the Royal Albert Hall and other prestigious events. A current musician vividly described the music scene indicating the impact of this on his present ministry. Most people were positive about the activities in Sunday School and later in Youth meetings and of having specific tasks. One person recalled: 'I remember vividly growing up in the church and especially R. Road at the time andhaving to help clear up the hall you know and tidying up the church and helping out before we started Sunday

School in the morning'.³⁵⁴ This indicates that positive memories were associated not only with singing and the planned activities but also with specific tasks of helping in church especially when family members were involved in the activities.

Moreover, this participation in the church gave them a sense of belonging to church in their early childhood. This view was expressed by 8 of the 10 participants. Of those who felt that they belonged, the following comments were noted: 'I was always welcomed you know as a young boy..... Church was always a place I felt safe'.³⁵⁵ 'Whether I decided to take salvation or not COGIC and my Church was always a part of my identity'.³⁵⁶ These themes of safety, identity and especially the concept of church family were raised by all age groups. This sense of belonging to a group has been demonstrated by Westerhoff,³⁵⁷ (*Will our Children have Faith?*), to be a key factor in the growth of faith. Admittedly, similar experiences can be gained in other places, as research by Gordon Lynch,³⁵⁸ (*Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*), has indicated that the club culture performs religious functions. However, Lynch also recognises the limitations of club culture in transforming people on a deeper level to consider issues relating to meaning and purpose in life. COGIC therefore provides more than a social space but a supportive environment where children's faith can be allowed to nurture and mature. This sense of belonging also seems to be a precursor to the next stage of conversion.

Furthermore, the safety provided by the church allowed participants to question their faith before making a commitment. The position within COGIC is that irrespective of their parents' Christian experience, the Christian journey starts at the point when an individual makes a definite commitment to Christ evidenced by a change in lifestyle and subsequent

³⁵⁴ Interviewee 1 pgs 1-2 lines 33 – 36. (The transcribed interviews were collated into a whole document and numbered by lines and pages. This is the referencing system that will be used from now on for interviewees)

³⁵⁵ Interviewee 1 pg 3 lines – 95 -99

³⁵⁶ Interviewee 4 pg 32 lines 1051 -1052

³⁵⁷ Westerhoff, *Will our Children have Faith?*

³⁵⁸ Lynch, Gordon *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing) 2005 pgs 162 -183

baptism (immersion in water) . This act of commitment is known as being 'saved', 'born again' or conversion. This process is expected for both children and adults. Thus, participants were asked about their experience of conversion; i.e. whether this was gradual or whether it was a Damascus Road experience like that recorded of St Paul, in the book of Acts Chapter 9. The term 'Damascus Road experience' was used as it is a familiar term to the participants, but there is recognition that conversion is viewed as both a process and an event within the wider sphere of Christendom. Francis Bridger has pointed out the importance of scripture in the background of those converted to Christianity in the New Testament.; thus although St Paul had a dramatic experience, he already had a background in Jewish scripture³⁵⁹ (*Children Finding Faith: Exploring a Child's Response to God*). Most of the participants (8 out of 10) explained that this was a gradual process and some could also pinpoint the impact of a particular sermon and the location.

Although most participants were involved in church activities from an early age, they identified the time that they made this commitment as being between the ages of 13 and 18 with most (7) between the ages of 16-18. This age range is not unusual as it was noted earlier that Fowler had attempted to account for the high number of conversions during adolescence. Although participants made their commitment at different ages, they used phrases such as 'kept thinking about being a Christian' 'I thought', 'the actual decision' when describing their accounts of conversion. These accounts demonstrate that there was careful assessment and analysis before making a decision. Even those who could identify a particular time recognised that their conversion was a spiritual journey or process and the particular event they singled out, crystallised it. Only two people thought of their conversion as a Damascus Road experience. From their comments, it was evident that these participants were also expressing some resistance to church before their conversion,

³⁵⁹ Bridger, Francis *Children Finding Faith: Exploring a Child's Response to God* (Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Scripture Union) 2000 pgs 156-162

indicating that like the other interviewees they were also contemplating issues of faith.

Indeed, a number of factors influenced their decision making process. These included maturity (growing in age as explained by the participant), the frailty of humanity, thinking about heaven and hell and the family and church leaders. Four of the respondents mentioned alongside other factors, the idea of going to heaven and avoiding hell. They explained that this was not so much about avoiding the terror of hell but of heaven being a better place to go. However, a major contributory factor for eight out of ten participants was the influence of people; parents and relatives; leaders in the church. They stressed that they were not forced to become Christians. One participant explained that as a young child, her desire was to be like the leaders when she grew older.³⁶⁰ It was observed that it was the lifestyle of the adult and the ability to encourage which were probably more important than the preaching and teaching from the pulpit. Thus the importance of parents and other significant adults in the faith formation of children and young people cannot be over stated.

In COGIC, the next step after conversion is baptism which is a prerequisite for membership. From the responses of these participants, it emerged that there was no set pattern from making that first commitment to the baptism pool. For some it was a matter of months and for others up to three years afterwards. Although, this variation in time could be due to the ages of some of the young people, some people explained that they made the choice as they realised the seriousness of the commitment; some of them had seen others started and not continue the journey and they did not want the same thing to befall them. Neither was there any consistency in terms of baptism or membership classes. The length and number of these sessions were left to the individual church. While some of the older participants lamented the lack of support on offer at the time, they recognised that the informal support within church along with their determination enabled them to keep their commitment. They also

³⁶⁰ Interviewee 3 pg 22 line 726

commented that such classes were now being implemented in their own churches.

Despite the lack of formal membership preparation, participants were keen to become official members and seemed, probably through unintentional socialisation or enculturation, to have understood the expectations. Despite feeling a sense of belonging in their childhood years, they were aware that it was now time to have 'official membership into the body of Christ at a conscious age. So ... obviously when I was younger I was just here in church and even though I felt belonging here I wasn't a technical member'.³⁶¹ Another person commented 'But I obviously felt that I was a member of the body of Christ by virtue of being saved but it was like the fellowship just rubber stamped it'.³⁶² Membership brought an increased level of participation across different strata. For some it was 'That I become more involved with the church',³⁶³ while for others it was the following: 'I was ... probably in ministry and ministering way before I was baptised or a member but ... I could now attend the Members meetings and hear all the goings on'.³⁶⁴ Another person commented 'I think you were taken a bit more seriously if you had an opinion and if you were brave enough to voice it'.³⁶⁵ Thus, increased participation through ministry, having their opinions accepted, or being involved in the official business of the church was very important.

A further overriding theme from this section was 'being serious' or 'being taken seriously' (as in the previous paragraph) which was mentioned by more than one participant. 'I knew it was serious and if I was going to enter this um with seriousness then I needed more knowledge ... you didn't have to but I went to New Believers Classes and after that there's Baptism classes and then I went after that and then I received my

³⁶¹ Interviewee 6 pg 56 lines 1919 - 1920

³⁶² Interviewee 9 pg 89 lines 3084 - 3085

³⁶³ Interviewee 3 pg 23 line 749

³⁶⁴ Interviewee 4 pg 33 lines 1061 - 1063

³⁶⁵ Interviewee 7 pg 67 lines 2316 - 2317

baptism'.³⁶⁶ This seemed to indicate that having grown up in the church, there was recognition of a deeper significance behind the activities in which they were engaged. As Paul in the book of Galatians espoused that the Law was the school master to bring people to Christ, so these activities were not ends in themselves but operated in the same way. Therefore, being serious meant looking beyond those activities to making a commitment to the person of those activities. Being taken seriously also meant an acceptance of the growing maturity of the young person. As expected, there were times that they stumbled or faltered in taking these first steps but with support these participants have now become fully fledged members.

Growing in Faith – A Steady Walk

Having taken the first steps, it was expected that the new members would begin to walk stronger as they matured in their faith. For these participants, growing in faith, the signs of and measurement of growth were all connected. Growing in faith was described by three different terms all expressing similar meanings; growing closer to God, getting stronger and a spiritual journey. Although the participants varied in their description of growing in faith, the three terms indicate a continuous movement in understanding more about the Christian life demonstrated in a change in lifestyle and involvement in ministry. While the signs were participating in ministry within church such as exhorting (mini sermons), giving a testimony publicly in church, depending more on God and being mature in handling situations, the measurement was through activities in ministry gifts, a growing relationship with God, living by the principles of the Word and the production of fruit. In terms of ministry, not only would the participants be aware of their own growth but they would be affirmed by the elders who on the basis of their performance would provide opportunities for further development. Thus growth in faith was considered to be measured through ministry in church activities externally from self but within the community of faith.

³⁶⁶ Interviewee 4 pg 31 lines 997 - 1001

The recurring themes throughout this and other sections are participation in ministry and change in lifestyle. Firstly, that participation in ministry gifts should be an indicator of growing in faith, a sign of growth or measurement of growth should not be surprising as the interviewees had been encouraged to exercise their gifts since childhood. It would appear that the participants had imbibed the idea, possibly through unwritten messages, that certain gifts were valued by the church and they aspired to operate within these. For example, there was nothing about involvement with community projects as espoused by this view that growth is measured by 'taking more part in the Churches activities within my local church'.³⁶⁷ This participant explained that these included 'Taking part in that um their local Friday meetings, reading, testimony service'.³⁶⁸ Another person who held the view that a sign of growth is in moving through the various auxiliaries within the church suggested that growth is measured by the way he could now recite the scriptures with the help of the Holy Spirit. He pointed out that he always had a problem in terms of retention but that 'over the years ... because you become more familiar you're able to recite some of the scriptures sometimes that helps you or gives you the impression or sign that you are growing'.³⁶⁹ Thus, it is possible that although the Church often preaches about evangelism in the community and gifts like those of administration that are exercised behind the scenes, the reality is that higher accolades are given to public gifts such as singing, preaching and teaching. In addition, in Pentecostal churches where the gifts are acknowledged to be operated in the power of the Holy Spirit, the honouring of those gifts may inadvertently lead to the impression that people who exercise them are more spiritual.

Next, the change in lifestyle associated with growth in faith is linked to dependence on God and applying the principles of the Word. These in turn lead to the production of spiritual fruit and a change in character. This is indicated by the following comments. 'You initially start off with the doubts and fears... but as you grow you become more confident.... You

³⁶⁷ Interviewee 3 pg 23 line 757

³⁶⁸ Interviewee 3 pg 23 line 760

³⁶⁹ Interviewee 1 pg 4 lines 142 - 144

develop this stronger understanding, develop principles and you tend to live more by them'.³⁷⁰ Another participant reported: 'But for someone to say something to me whether it be in work or out with friends and for me not to just flare up and say "who do you think you are talking to" you know to me that's a mark of development that you are able to stand on your own two feet and take the Word and apply it to your life'.³⁷¹ Yet another commented 'Well growth is measured by um the fruits that are developing in your life um what's for me outlined in Galatians 5. You've got the works of the flesh and the works of the flesh are supposed to be replaced by as a Christian with the fruits of the spirit.... Yea um the reduction in my temperament changed just who I was as a character'.³⁷² This change in lifestyle is linked to the doctrine of sanctification and holiness as interpreted within COGIC.

Although, not many participants mentioned these two foundation principles of COGIC, holiness and sanctification, when referring to the signs of or measurement of growth, they had described them when talking about growing in faith. Most participants had recognised that in the past, holiness focussed on dress style but realised that there was a shift in thinking or felt that there was now a different emphasis. For the participants, holiness involved a whole manner of life including behaviour and presentation to God; it involved abstinence and cleanliness. Sanctification is seen as the ongoing process of becoming holy and separate from the world; never ceasing until death. The results indicate that although the language of holiness and sanctification was not used readily by participants, their responses demonstrated that most of the participants could articulate their views about holiness and sanctification. More importantly, they appeared to be living by these principles.

Commitment

Growth in faith brought an increase level of commitment for all participants. Bryan suggests that commitment to God is characterized 'by

³⁷⁰ Interviewee 10 pg 99 lines 3411 -3414

³⁷¹ Interviewee 4 pgs 33 – 34 lines 1092 - 1098

³⁷² Interviewee 9 pg 90 lines 3105 - 3112

the degree to which someone surrenders themselves to God'.³⁷³ This indicates that it is manifested through loyalty or faithfulness to the principles of Christianity demonstrated in obedience to God and faithfulness to the Church. This view is corroborated by responses from some of the participants. For some, the commitment was linked to an eschatological view that events in society are signs of a bigger picture and therefore there is an urgent need to preach the gospel for the saving of souls. Not everyone was so heavenly minded and commitment was conceptualised as having fellowship with God through reading the Word and prayer, by attendance at church, being driven by a range of task orientated activities, having responsibility to continue the church or through spiritual warfare.

Firstly, one person explained that 'I'm more committed to God always ... I really do want to be in close fellowship with him.... but sometimes when you are in the system ...you can get complacent so yes my commitment to God is always strong and I wish for it to be stronger everyday ... but sometimes commitment to church can waiver'.³⁷⁴ This indicated that faith was not just rooted in the religious activities at church but in a deepening relationship with the transcendent. Alongside this was increased attendance at church. Could it be that despite this lack of articulation of faith formation, the church arranges activities with the intention of helping people to grow in faith? Therefore the increased attendance could be due to the prayer meetings, Bible studies, youth meetings, fasting and prayer which, according to the respondents, helped them to grow. In a survey of pastors for the Ministerial Focussed Study (MFS), they reported that they planned for the growth of their congregations mainly through Bible studies and prayer meetings. Could commitment also be for the minister linked to altruism; doing something without being rewarded? (COGIC Ministers are not salaried but are voluntary workers).

In addition, others highlighted the fact that commitment to God involved pleasing God and not dishonouring God's name. For example, this

³⁷³ Bryan, pg 141

³⁷⁴ Interviewee 4 pg 35 lines 1146 - 1153

participant responded: 'God is my purpose in life so that kind a drives me to please him with whatever I do and Church. I am committed to Church as well cause I believe that having fellowship with church members is very important for your spiritual growth ... and we are all trying to reach the same goal so I think like building each other up is very important'.³⁷⁵ Thus for this participant, commitment also involved building up the body of Christ.

A further theme from this section was the view that commitment was about the responsibility to continue the church. This participant explained 'Yes I feel more committed to God because I feel that now I think we are accepted as being the generation that the church has to put their hands in ...but really behind all that's going on they are depending on us to implement these things. We can't do it now and I think yes and I am committed to holding on to what we believe - in a sense that if we don't, it's going to be down to us and the whole thing could just crumble and I think now the responsibility is now on us so we're talking about Now we are in a position where we have to do it.... We have an input and we have a voice that has to be heard that has to be listened to'.³⁷⁶ This view indicated a concern that without the right leadership, the church could collapse.

Still another view was that commitment was measured in terms of spiritual warfare 'Your commitment is measured um at times by the level of warfare that you go through I can honestly say that I have gone through spiritual warfare stuff that I never expected to happen in my life.... I have had to really been praying about certain things that have been going on in my life or even outside of it so um and faith increases in so many different ways'.³⁷⁷ Therefore, faith grows through the fighting of spiritual battles and presumably, the victories won. Thus there are many facets to commitment, which may include but transcends a social gathering. The

³⁷⁵ Interviewee 6 pg 585 lines 1991 - 1996

³⁷⁶ Interviewee 8 pg 80 lines 2769 - 2777

³⁷⁷ Interviewee 9 pg 91 lines 3132 - 3137

focus in meeting is usually with the idea of pleasing God and building each other in faith.

Support in growing in faith

Despite a lack of formal structures, and people lamenting the lack of training, it would seem that there are a number of agencies and people within church as well as family members which directly or indirectly influence faith formation. An overarching theme is learning by experience. As it did in the early years, Sunday School continues to be a major contributor in faith formation jointly with and only marginally overtaken by the Youth Ministry as children grow older. The agencies of the Church recognised by most participants as offering support were the Sunday School and the Youth Departments; nine mentioned the Youth Department and eight the Sunday School Department. The practical benefits of Sunday School was emphasised by one person. 'Sunday School was a big support as it allowed us to come out of our shell and it allowed us to learn at a basic stage all the stories about God and ... about people that trusted God and stuff and it also helped our communication skills as well because we were told to do a show and tell at the end of what you have learned so it helps your memory at that age as well which is very important and also helps your presentation skills and communication skills as well. I was quite a young age and yea it helped me in life because I did a drama A level so it kind a, you know'.³⁷⁸ One participant explained the informal training through the Youth Meetings: 'I've just picked up from learning and activities from being involved in the Youth Department and being involved in singing in the choir and sometimes now in coordinating the choir ... some of those things kept me in church. It kept me focussed on salvation'.³⁷⁹ Another person reported: 'I asked questions. I looked and see how other people did things and I developed this understanding ... but I had no formal training for that'.³⁸⁰ Despite the lack of formal training, these participants had grown in their

³⁷⁸ Interviewee 6 pg 59 lines 2025 - 2031

³⁷⁹ Interviewee 4 pg 30 lines 1194 - 1201

³⁸⁰ Interviewee 10 pgs 101 -102 lines 3499 - 3502

faith by learning through the experience of being involved in activities. Educational research (e.g. John Dewey who has been previously mentioned) would support this as a good pedagogical strategy. There is a danger, however, that with this strategy, some people may continue to maintain the status quo but those who are creative could seize the opportunity for change. Thus the church has a facilitating role in providing opportunities for faith to grow.

Apart from the agencies or planned activities of the church, there were people who supported the participants in their faith formation. Some of these had influenced them to become Christians but the circle of people had now widened. This is expected as there would be a growing network of people within the local Church and also within the denomination as the participants attend gatherings such as conventions. For most participants, it was people in leadership, including the Bishop and pastors who were influential. Three people noted Bishops and Pastors, two people referred to youth leaders, another two to Sunday School teachers and two more to Church Mothers. Thus the role of leaders can be crucial as people learn from observing them or from unofficial mentoring of them.

It also seems that there were people who influenced others indirectly without being aware that they were doing so. Four people mentioned the older or ordinary people. One person explained that she did not have a mentor but that she kept her eye on some people. 'There are people that you look at and you have an admiration for and you look at their countenance and you just feel wow you're really amazing and I'm going to keep my eye on you because yea you have got something that I would like to have for the future'.³⁸¹ Still another person emphasised, 'I often try and make reference to the little old lady in the corner; insignificant individual who would at times give you a word of encouragement. I believe to me those words of encouragement went a long way to strengthening me to encourage me along the path'.³⁸² Thus, in addition to leaders, there are people within the church exercising their spiritual gifts of encouragement

³⁸¹ Interviewee 4 pg 37 lines 1212 - 1216

³⁸² Interviewee 10 pg 102 lines 3504 - 3506

to support the faith of people. For some, support came from their peer group or family members.

Role of the family

There were a number of ways in which the family supported the growth in faith. These varied from having family devotions and prayers, discussions and debates, encouraging involvement in Church, sharing testimonies, encouraging or being aware of their individual needs. From these, I will concentrate mainly on family devotions, discussions and modelling from parents who encouraged involvement. Firstly, family devotions were important and occurred at different times and frequencies. Five people mentioned family devotions and three of these also noted their parents' sensitivity to their needs. For example, one person explained: 'Well I think my father was very clever in that he knew I loved music so what he did he would allow me to rehearse with the (group) of the church, and when the (group) gave up playing, he allowed me to rehearse in his cellar and then and I think he was very smart and that he knew that kept me in church and I remember he bought a van and let me use the van to ferry our equipment around and at the same time I could do odd jobs picking up removals and he knew what to do to actually keep me in that loop and not going to parties'.³⁸³ For others, the parents not only exercised some wisdom in adopting a casual approach; i.e. letting them figure things out and not pushing, but every now and again engaging them in discussion about their faith, allowing them space to enjoy music, encouraging them to attend prayer meetings and dissuading them from following friends.

After family devotions, discussion was the next common response. Three people referred to these and one said 'When I started developing in my faith... I was able to debate with my dad and debate with my mum and have proper deep conversations about all that theological type of stuff'.³⁸⁴ For another person, the time of discussion also served to instil 'family values in the sense that we always had Sunday morning breakfast together. Every night, every evening we all had to sit down to dinner and

³⁸³ Interviewee 8 lines 2830 - 2835

³⁸⁴ Interviewee 4 pg 37 lines 1238 - 1241

say grace etc and we will discuss the world, church, whatever'.³⁸⁵ Although, only three people said this, the value of this is shown in Westerhoff's³⁸⁶ (Will our Children have Faith?) work and by Keith White³⁸⁷ (*The Growth of Love: Understanding Five Essential Elements of Child Development*) in his work in a therapeutic residential environment. Discussion and debate within the family allow children and young people the space to question their faith within a safe environment.

For other people, it was the fact that their parents modelled what they believed and had the children involved in activities within the church. 'My dad ... taught us the books of the Bible when we were under 10 ... also we used to go to lots of prayer meetings everywhere. Every local convention we were there so we knew about church and we knew how to act um also um he used to teach us songs cause he's a song writer so he would let us do songs and we would showcase them in different churches and stuff like that so it helped me now that I am in music'.³⁸⁸ Another commented: 'My dad was the Sunday school teacher, he was in the choir so whenever they were practising ... the activities would say rub off on me... and because of the family structure and how we were fitting within the structure of the church, members of the church would always be around; the Pastor, the Deacon was always coming around yea so we were always tightly woven into church life. So like Sunday was the big day but all the other days something was happening'.³⁸⁹ For these participants, the involvement in church life was not just about being engaged socially but a foundation for their own experience of faith.

Thus, one cannot underestimate the role of the family in bringing children to faith and supporting their growth. Whether, it is the planned family devotion or the modelling of faith or the wisdom of stepping back but prodding and encouraging every now and again, it all helps. Parents know their children best and have an idea of what is likely to work. Churches

³⁸⁵ Interviewee 5 pg 50 lines 1703 - 1706

³⁸⁶ Westerhoff, Will our Children have Faith?

³⁸⁷ White, Keith J *The Growth of Love: Understanding Five Essential Elements of Child Development* (Abingdon: The Bible Reading Fellowship) 2008

³⁸⁸ Interviewee 6 pg 60 lines 2052 - 2057

³⁸⁹ Interviewee 10 pg 102 lines 3513 - 3520

could do well to collaborate with parents; not only in trying to teach them but in learning from them.

Maturing and flexing the muscles

Challenges

As people step out on a journey of faith, it is expected that they will meet challenges along the path. Thus, participants were asked to recount any personal challenges; whether through sickness, how they overcame sin or whether there was opposition from people which had hindered their growth. The participants were reticent about challenges with some not wanting to elaborate about personal issues. One mentioned the jockeying and petty bickering in church and another workplace ethics. However, another person described his manhood and the temptation of women as a challenge. He said 'I was always a party man in the past having, you know, female connection you know. I think the struggle has been within me as a person on that side'.³⁹⁰ This last comment correlated with the concept of growing in faith as becoming more resistant to sin. Participants gave specific examples of the methods they employed.

The church's position on sin and humankind can be found in Appendix 6. In summary while there is a belief that through confession and repentance of sin, there is forgiveness and right standing based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, there is a recognition that we are tempted to commit specific acts of disobedience which can damage our relationship with God. It is the latter to which this question referred. Although there were a variety of responses, for most people (four participants), prayer was the key in overcoming sin. This was combined with the reading of and application of the Word (three participants). One participant explained; 'With me I pray a lot about it and then, um, like the scriptures and being transformed by the renewing of your mind I try to live by that and use that to help me to avoid it from happening again the next time round'.³⁹¹ This strategy was also supported by another person who said: 'Well I pray and

³⁹⁰ Interviewee 1 pg 8 lines 278 - 282

³⁹¹ Interviewee 2 pg 18 lines 597 - 599

obviously reading the Bible there are times when you sometimes see or picture the possibility of sin beforehand and you stop because the Holy Spirit shows you and you don't do it. Then unfortunately there are sometimes when you go head long into it and then you have to sort of ask God for forgiveness and to repair the situation'.³⁹² The importance of reading the Word to overcome sin was emphasized by another person: 'So overcoming it is just basically feeding yourself with the Word of God ... so it makes you think like ok I am on this road so I can't do those sorts of things. Cause it's so easy to sin but it's harder to maintain a clean living life, but the rewards are better I find.'³⁹³ The participants were keen to point out that prayers were more like realistic conversations with God, showing a relationship with God rather than just following a set of rules and regulations.

In addition, two participants included thinking about the consequences of their actions. One person reported: 'I am one of these people I would hate to be caught so I don't get involved. Caught in the sense that if I did go out and do that and then something happens then so I try ... not to get to involved, ok sneak out to the odd dance or something because I loved dancing'.³⁹⁴ Another person explained it thus: 'I remind myself of the consequences of my action because at the time it might seem ... pretty good idea at the time and at the time I might think right you can get away or might be able to get away but then I always weigh up the consequences afterwards, ... and when you think like that it always throws cold water on it and it you think you know what leave that'.³⁹⁵ For some, the consequences came in the form of exposure at church. This person explained: 'if you did kind a mess up you know that next day when you go to church on Sunday that the mothers in church would know whether or not you had done right, ... so straight away don't fool yourself ... you think I am not going to mess up like that again. I think that was the fear of God being in that environment.... even if you had you still couldn't hide; there

³⁹² Interviewee 9 pg 93 lines 3196 - 3200

³⁹³ Interviewee 6 pgs 61 – 62 lines 2076 - 2081

³⁹⁴ Interviewee 5 pg 51 lines 1723 - 1725

³⁹⁵ Interviewee 7 pg 72 lines 2494 - 2500

was holiness and they knew you messed up' ³⁹⁶ Thus thinking about the consequences of one's actions, the holiness atmosphere and the Word of knowledge from the Holy Spirit helped some people not to overstep the mark.

Feeling unsupported in the church

When a diverse group with varied needs, meets on a regular basis, there will be times when individuals feel unsupported. Although most people mentioned the support and positive influences by others in church, they also identified times that they felt unsupported. Only one person felt that there were no issues around support. The majority of the others outlined a number of individual issues but were very philosophical. One person summed it up thus: 'I think generally most people go through that situation and feel that way... but err its part of your development and it's - you can think like that but it doesn't necessarily mean that that the Church is actually acting in that way and when you do feel that way then sometimes you act so, then wake yourself up a bit and say well get on with it'.³⁹⁷ Others named the following issues: ignorance on the part of the older people, lack of care about the issue of singleness, the perceived threat of the older men from the younger men who were only interested in helping the church and not always understanding concepts from the pulpit. Nevertheless, these issues were not in themselves enough to stop them from leaving church.

It was also important to establish whether the participants felt that their growth was hindered in any way. As expected with a range of participants, there were varied responses. One person explained that she felt that she had hindered herself by over thinking, while another had difficulties through the adolescence stage. Four people reported that the ignorance of adults who did not understand youth was an issue and one person in particular person stated how this impacted on the youth in that some of the adults stopped them from considering certain jobs because they were Christians. Others said that their ability to think independently prevented

³⁹⁶ Interviewee 8 pg 82 lines 2856 - 2861

³⁹⁷ Interviewee 9 pg 93 lines 3203 - 3207

them from being influenced by certain events around them. One participant expressed it thus: 'what I would say is there were things that could hinder my growth but I fixed my faith to not allow them to hinder my growth'.³⁹⁸ From the responses in this section, it appears that their focus on God allowed them to ride some storms that would have shaken others.

A mature Walk

Individual responsibility/Strategies for discipleship

Overcoming some of these difficult situations indicate that participants would also need to take some personal responsibility for their growth. A report from the General Synod Board of Education (*Children in the Way: New Directions for the Church's Children*) posited that there are inferences for Christian nurture and education work from the way children are encouraged to explore and make discoveries for themselves and to find out information for themselves in formal education.³⁹⁹ With this in mind, it is expected that there would also be a parallel with adults and they would also take responsibility for their own learning. Participants were therefore asked about personal strategies which supported their formation. It was also hoped that this could be compared with what the church offers. The participants had already discussed how they sometimes yielded to temptation. A mature walk is therefore not about perfection but progressing in faith by the power of the Holy Spirit so that they are yielding less to sin.

The results indicate that the participants used a range of strategies. All ten mentioned prayer and Bible reading, whether it was occasional or daily, reading of other literature, courses and visiting other churches. Six participants stated that they had a daily devotion of prayer and Bible Study. For one person, this devotion was extended to talking to God

³⁹⁸ Interviewee 7 pg 73 lines 2521 - 2522

³⁹⁹ General Synod Board of Education *Children in the Way: New Directions for the Church's Children* (The National Society (Church of England) and Church House Publishing) 1988 pgs. 4-5

throughout the day through the use of Scripture popping up on an iPhone. In addition, two other people reported the use of electronic Bible aids. The literature included the International Sunday School Manual (three people), various books (three people) and the use of Bible Commentaries (three people). Others supplemented their devotions with visiting other churches (four participants) and attending courses. The courses ranged from internal ones such as the annual Ministers' Retreat, those held at the Church's Bible College or external specialist ones such as Counselling. The results indicated that as adults, the participants take responsibility for promoting their own growth. This is not seen as an indictment on the church but is more about self development. Although Lynch has observed the influence of television on religion⁴⁰⁰, none of the participants mentioned television as a source of support. The technological aids were iPhones, computer with a verse to phone, Twitter, and internet. Prayer, fasting and Bible study are activities that are mentioned not only in this section but are also considered to be key themes in overcoming sin.

Statement of Faith & Doctrines of COGIC

The Statement of Faith is where most church organisations outline their basic beliefs. It is usually expected that before becoming members of the organisation, people become familiar with and subscribe to these. This is true within COGIC as within any other organisation. The Statement of Faith is read during conventions; some churches who own their building might have it displayed on the wall but it is unclear as to how often it is read in the local churches.

In addition, the doctrines are outlined in more detail and are seen as the basis on which believers conduct their lives. Observation indicates that although these are biblically based, they are mentioned when people are received into fellowship but not often referred to in sermons. When asked about the Statement of Faith and the doctrines of COGIC, the results indicated that most people were familiar with them but could not repeat them. Three people were able to give a summary of them. One person

⁴⁰⁰ Lynch, pgs 79 - 80

said that they struggled with them and only one person said they did not know them. Those who had attended Bible College fared better with the doctrines. As to their importance, eight of the participants said that the Statement of Faith and doctrines were important. One person felt that they indirectly influenced his life but believed that his relationship with God was more important than knowing about the doctrines of COGIC. On the contrary, another person saw it as important noting that 'I see it as the cornerstone of my faith; from what I understand of the Bible, the doctrines are Bible based and supported by scripture and ... it helps me when I am dealing with individuals outside of my faith, my church or denomination'.⁴⁰¹ Yet another person responded 'it's helped me in my faith because I have an understanding that is unshakeable'.⁴⁰² For these people, the importance of the Statement of Faith and doctrines of COGIC varied but for most the importance was in understanding their faith so that they could explain to others.

Roles / responsibilities in church

As the participants have grown in their faith, they have taken on more and varied roles within the organisation. Some people have had a number of roles simultaneously. For example, District Superintendents are also pastors of their local churches and are members of the Executive Board. One person is involved in youth ministry and leading praise and worship at both local and national level. Two people are involved in the administrative area of their local churches as treasurers or involved with the accounts, four have been or are still van drivers, six have been leaders in the Youth Department and three were Sunday school teachers. This links to the section on commitment and it is therefore questionable as to whether they were committed to the church before taking on more responsibility or whether they are committed because of the tasks they have been given.

⁴⁰¹ Interviewee No 10 pg 106 lines 3650 -3656

⁴⁰² Interviewee No 4 pg 42 line 1435

The Church's role in supporting participants to deal with wider issues

The responses indicated that the participants' experiences depended on the local church they attended. Four people said that the church did not support them to deal with wider issues. One person commented 'I think most of what I have learnt is through working life experiences as well going out and meeting other people, pastors, going to other churches rather than I think my own church. I think it's experience and knowledge built up under my own steam'.⁴⁰³ This shows the determination of participants to support their own learning. One person felt that while this was not the case when he was younger, it was now being addressed. Five people felt that they had support from the church.

Considering that COGIC is a church with mainly a Black constituency, I wanted to ascertain whether the church highlighted black issues. Only one participant felt that it was the case; 'Um I think it's come up but I don't remember it being at the forefront'.⁴⁰⁴ Seven people said that it did not do so while two people reported that they were not interested in such issues. One of the latter commented 'Although we are dominantly a Black church that has not normally been a really big issue as such primarily because I really believe that ... we don't really see ourselves as being a Black Church'.⁴⁰⁵ This indicates the colour blind approach adopted by some people.

Participants varied in their responses as to whether such topics would have made a difference. Three said yes, two were ambivalent and the others said no. One person observed: 'I think such topics would have enhanced my awareness as a Black Christian and made me more proud of who I am. Um being a Christian is one thing; growing up in this country as a Black person we had to fight to survive in school because we were a minority so I think just stuff that would make us realise ... so we can achieve growing up...there weren't any Black doctors or lawyers or stuff like that it was just my father mother and most of the people that I knew

⁴⁰³ Interviewee No 1 pg 11 lines 389 - 392

⁴⁰⁴ Interviewee No 2 pg 20 lines 670 - 671

⁴⁰⁵ Interviewee No 9 pg 95 lines 3283 - 3285

were in church were labourers of some sort doing something to make ends meet. That would have helped'.⁴⁰⁶ This idea of being more knowledgeable was identified by other participants but they felt that this awareness would not have supported their growth in faith. This person commented; 'Um yea it would have made me a bit more knowledgeable that people like myself that were in the Bible years ago probably stood next to Jesus but it ... wouldn't you know help me become more faithful at the end of the day no matter what colour anybody was; Jesus is the main focus'.⁴⁰⁷ Even those who thought that it was good to have these topics felt wary of promoting culture.

Community Projects

There was agreement that the church should be involved in community projects, although one person said that he could not think of any. Responses include the following: 'I think to be fair they have been involved in community activities for many years; they have done Saturday schools, nurseries issues that COGIC faces where Pastors are not full time ...but if they were full time a lot of them would have been more involved in community activities or be channelling more resources in community activities locally'.⁴⁰⁸ This response indicated an awareness of a major issue in COGIC; most of the pastors have secular jobs in addition to overseeing the flock.

Future Actions for the Church

This question prompted a number of responses. Many of these referred to follow up after baptism and teaching. Six of the responses referred to teaching; for example, being clear about church and biblical doctrine and explaining them; teaching people to do the things that are right and to have the right motives and intentions; teaching Sunday School whilst recognising that there are problems because of time; making teaching relevant to children and young people; relating the Bible to their life at the present and having solid Bible teaching after baptism.

⁴⁰⁶ Interviewee No 8 pg 86 lines 2978 - 2986

⁴⁰⁷ Interviewee No 6 pg 64 lines 2193 - 2196

⁴⁰⁸ Interviewee No 1 pg 12 lines 405 - 412

Three more participants referred to mentoring and following up people; checking up on new baptised members to see how they are getting on; following new believers, pre-baptism classes with relevant topics (this could also come under teaching) and mentoring. One person referred to the church being more outward looking and getting more non churched people in which could be a possible reference to attracting more people from the community who are not regular church goers. In addition, four people referred to involvement with the wider community and one to involvement with charities. Two participants mentioned that the church should be more multicultural. One said 'I just think that our Church ... move away from the predominance of being a Black church to being a mixed multi cultural church. That is my biggest um prayer that I am praying for my local church to be multi cultural; we are moving in that direction but I want to see it a little bit more'.⁴⁰⁹ It appears that these particular participants see the Black Church as being associated with a stigma. On the other hand, another person suggested working with other churches ecumenically. 'Um I think they can work together a lot more At the end of the day it's even though you are in your organisation and you're proud of your organisation we are all children of God'.⁴¹⁰ Admittedly, it was not explored with the participant whether the ecumenical work referred to other Black churches, multicultural ones or both.

Other suggestions were noted such as the need for inspirational leadership, having more activities for young people, the need for the church to listen, and practical ways of investing in people long term such as sponsoring people to go to Bible College or play instruments. However, the overriding theme from this section was about teaching indicating the need for the articulation of an intentional strategy.

⁴⁰⁹ Interviewee No 9 pg 96 lines 3306 - 3309

⁴¹⁰ Interviewee No 6 pg 64 lines 2211 - 2220

Summary

This chapter focussed on the beginnings of the journey and noted the positive early experiences, the feelings of belonging, conversion and baptism, influences and signs of growth. The data suggests that even before a formal commitment to Christ is made, children are involved in the church at a very young age. Even experiences such as helping to tidy up the church were viewed as positive because they felt that they belonged. Moreover, their involvement in singing, music and other activities were appreciated by the adults and gave them a sense of being valued. Yet, although they identified with the church, as they grew older, they were aware that they were not quite members until they made that commitment to Christ and were baptised in water. By speaking about their transition to commit to Christ as a serious stage, the participants seem to imply that this pre-commitment stage was an immature stage. As they now consciously entered a walk of holiness, these activities were not considered as childish things to be discarded but the foundation of their development in ministry.

For the majority, this new level of commitment was not seen as sudden but came after a period of thinking; only two people felt that it was a sudden decision. The results nevertheless, correlate with research which considers conversion as both a process and an event and emphasises the importance of scripture in the role of those converted⁴¹¹ (*Children finding Faith*). All of these participants had attended church from an early age and had a background in scripture through the various agencies of the church. The results indicate, however, that although people had been in the church from their earliest years, their commitment did not come until they were in their teens. This is also in line with research that indicates not only that most people make commitment at this age but that some level of cognitive maturity (a major change in a person's thinking, feeling and willing) is needed⁴¹² (*Will our Children have Faith?*).

⁴¹¹ Bridger, pg 156

⁴¹² Westerhoff, pg 95

Most of the participants could identify the influences that led them to make a commitment to Christ and the family and significant adults within the church had a major role and later on in the nurturing of their faith. In addition, most people could also describe the support or lack of within the Church and among their own family and the strategies that they later employed to support their own growth.

That these participants grew in their faith is not in question. The Sunday School and Youth Departments were considered to be the agencies that not only provided opportunities for them to be active in church in their early days but also continued to support them as they grew in their faith. Thus although there are no formal articulated strategies for faith formation within COGIC, the agencies of the Sunday School and Youth Departments provide the scriptural input that is needed for people to make a decision. The actual event of conversion may happen elsewhere but the agencies support the process.

Apart from Sunday School and Youth Departments which provide some activities for children and youth and training for their leaders, the participants also recognise that there is also experiential learning through involvement in activities provided by the church nearly every day of the week. These activities include Bible Studies, Prayer Meetings, special times for fasting, music and choir rehearsals. In addition, the Bible College caters for people over 18, has a module on Sunday School and although not compulsory for ministers, the results of my Ministerial Focussed Study for this course showed that out of the 15 pastors who completed the questionnaire 11 had some theological training. Therefore there is a level of Christian education in the Church which enables leaders to plan and implement strategies, although they might not be formalised.

Despite the level of Christian education in the church which supports faith formation, the participants could also highlight areas in which the Church needed to change, especially in the area of teaching in order to support a future generation. However, there was no mention of involvement in social or political activities which is a hallmark of COGIC USA. Through thematic

analysis, a number of themes were identified; these were later collapsed into the main themes of agencies of the church, family, prayer, fasting and Bible Study and an alternative pedagogy and will be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

The views of the participants are valid in giving a perspective in how their faith is formed. These will be juxtaposed alongside the research literature as consideration is given to how faith is formed in COGIC UK.

Chapter 7: Faith Formation in COGIC

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you (Galatians 4:19 KJV)

A reminder of the research questions would assist in focussing the discussion. These are 1) how is faith formed within Holiness/Pentecostal churches in the United Kingdom (in this case the Church of God in Christ (COGIC)) and 2) is there an effective intentional strategy which is theologically valid to support this? It is also worth considering at this point that my preferred definition of faith formation is a 'person's progression in faith (a gift from God) towards God with Jesus as their role model'⁴¹³ (Being and Becoming: Adolescence' in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*). I have also added that this progression takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit. The literature and the data gathered from interviewees indicate that although the process of faith formation is not articulated within COGIC in the United Kingdom, one can nevertheless identify some key instrumental factors which support it. In the absence of a prescribed approach to faith formation, it is hardly surprising that there is no formal strategy. Yet this lack of articulation of faith formation in Pentecostal churches is not confined to COGIC. It does not appear that many people have risen to the challenge of Cheryl Bridges Johns' observation that 'a Pentecostal theory of Christian education has not been articulated'⁴¹⁴ (*Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*). Based on the lives of Black women in Pentecostal churches, Maxine Howell,⁴¹⁵ (*Towards a Pneumatological Pedagogy: An Investigation into the Development and Articulation of a Theological Pedagogy by and for Marginalised African – Caribbean Women*), has attempted this in an unpublished PhD thesis. She has called this approach of Black women re-reading the Bible from a liberative perspective which connects them with women in the Bible and their own experiences, a womanist pneumatological pedagogy. This initiative is to be applauded as although the congregations of Pentecostal churches are

⁴¹³ Bryan J, (2007) pg 140

⁴¹⁴ Bridges Johns Cheryl *Pentecostal Formation* pg 12

⁴¹⁵ Howell, Maxine *Towards a Pneumatological Pedagogy*

mainly women, their lives are often overlooked. However, the thesis was never intended to cover an overall theory of education within Pentecostal churches. One can assume therefore that since a theory of Christian education has not been articulated within Pentecostal churches, then faith formation, an aspect of Christian education would not be. In her attempt to articulate the dynamics of Pentecostal catechesis (a concept borrowed from John Westerhoff), Bridges Johns concluded that 'there is a need for ongoing dialogue and research regarding how Pentecostals make disciples' ⁴¹⁶ (*Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*). Yet despite this lack of articulation, it is evident from the 'COGIC babies', some of whom have taken up leadership roles within the church and continue to attend in their 50s, the continued growth of the church and the results of the interviewees, that there are people whose faith has been supported and formed within COGIC from their earliest days. Like new born babies, they have been nourished with the Word and doctrines and acculturated into the church. Within the family of the church, they have been enabled to crawl, take their first few faltering steps and to walk strongly. They have progressed in their faith towards God and are now contributing to the life of the church. Whether they have supplemented what has been given in church through other materials does not negate the facilitating role of the church in providing a spiritual environment for growth. Undoubtedly, there will have been some who have also felt less supported for whatever reason and have voted with their feet. Their views are as valid as those who have stayed. This could be the subject of another investigation as the results could assist the church in considering the hindrances to faith formation. However, with the limitations of time and space, it was beyond the scope of this project.

How is faith formed?

This question depends on our definition of faith and the theoretical influences on our theological stance. The literature reveals that researchers could start with a similar premise about the definition of faith but then have divergent views on how faith grows. They may agree that

⁴¹⁶ Bridges Johns pg 140

there is a progression in faith towards God but that is where the similarities end. James Fowler, Thomas Groome and John Westerhoff consider faith to be a verb. Fowler based his definition on the Latin and Greek words which portray the idea of actively pledging allegiance, trusting, committing, and resting one's heart upon. Faith is therefore relational as there is always another involved. Westerhoff describes it as a way of knowing, being and willing. He expands on Fowler's idea of having another involved not only to God as supreme but with fellow human beings. For Westerhoff, faith results in an action with others; changing and expanding through our actions with others and expressing itself daily in actions with others⁴¹⁷ (*Will our Children have Faith?*).

Although Groome does not mention the term 'faith formation', based on the answer that Jesus gave to the young lawyer to love God with all our heart, soul and mind he posits that the learning outcome of Christian education is to engage all of our being. Taking a liberationist approach which is influenced by the work of Paulo Freire, he therefore proposes that lived Christian faith is a holistic affair engaging the whole of people's 'beings': their bodily, mental and volitional capacities; their heads, hearts and life-styles; cognition, desire and action; understanding, relationship and service; conviction, prayer and agape. This leads Christians to engage in a threefold dynamic of historical activities; believing, trusting and doing God's will ⁴¹⁸ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*).

It was probably not within the remit of Anthony Reddie's work to articulate his ideas on faith formation but he appears to be hinting at the concept by arguing that his model seeks to create a form of progression by which the Christian faith can be lived out with integrity and assurance'.⁴¹⁹ His Black Christian education of liberation model is influenced by Black and Liberation theology and Transformative education. Reddie asserts that his model is a practical liberation of theology within the British context⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁷ Westerhoff, pg 87

⁴¹⁸ Groome, Thomas *Sharing Faith* pg 18

⁴¹⁹ Reddie, pg 4

⁴²⁰ Reddie, pg 4

(Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation).

It has already been cited in Chapter 3 that Fowler,⁴²¹ (*Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*), acknowledges the influence of cognitive, moral and psychosocial development on his work and takes a developmental stance while Westerhoff,⁴²² (*Will our Children have Faith?*), who affirms his debt to Fowler, has taken a sociological position. Fowler's developmental stance leads him to propose a vertical model based on stages of faith. His model of working with children has been taken on board by a number of historic churches. Rejecting the idea of stages, Westerhoff uses the analogy of a tree trunk and proposes that faith expands in four distinctive styles. He describes each style of faith as a generalisation and asserts that none are meant to be boxes in which people are placed or to judge ourselves or others⁴²³ (*Will our Children have Faith?*). He observed that as each ring of a tree trunk is complete in itself, and an additional ring leads to an expanded tree, so each style of faith is complete and not better than another. He sees faith growing outward as the rings of a tree with each style adding to the previous one. His styles are: experienced faith (early childhood) which is unconsciously copied, affiliative faith (primary/middle years) – sharing faith, searching faith (adolescence) where the accepted norms are challenged and mature/owned faith (adulthood) where faith which is previously owned, is shared and questioned and then finally owned.

While Westerhoff has criticised Fowler's developmental model, Groome has rejected Westerhoff's sociological model. Groome also subscribes to the idea of stages. While Westerhoff uses the analogy of a tree trunk, Groome compares his proposal to the orchestrated movements of a symphony or a dance and prefers to use the word movement. The approach is based on a 'Focussing activity and five movements'. There is a logical sequence but they can overlap, recur and recombine in their

⁴²¹ Fowler James W *Stages of Faith*

⁴²² Westerhoff, John H. 111 pg 87

⁴²³ Westerhoff, pg 88

sequences⁴²⁴ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). Ostensibly, the different perspectives will also influence the pedagogy.

Fowler's model is based on a rational view of knowledge which does not acknowledge the hidden curriculum and is very much dependent on instruction. However, John Westerhoff⁴²⁵ is critical of Fowler's model and labels it a schooling, instructional-training paradigm. He contends that it is antiquated and argues that this paradigm was effective when an ecology of six institutions worked in religious education. He noted that there were homogeneous communities, secure family structure, public school which adhered to a protestant ethos, the church, a community neighbourhood congregation, popular religious periodicals to provide religious education in the home and the Sunday School. However, with the changes in these institutions, i.e. heterogeneous churches, pluralism of religious and secular persuasions, the church is left trying to do what six institutions did. He argues that the informal hidden curriculum in churches is often more influential than the formal curriculum but that the schooling-instructional paradigm does not take into account the process of religious socialisation⁴²⁶ (*Will our Children have Faith?*).

As Westerhoff believes that faith is formed within the community of faith of believers, he proposes a catechetical, community of faith/body paradigm. Although catechesis includes instruction and training, formation is a key element. In his model socialisation or enculturation through the community of faith is important. However, Groome's idea that Christian faith is a holistic affair leads him to stress a combination of critical reasoning, analytical remembering, creative imagining and the 'whole mind' in a pedagogy that honours and engages people's whole 'being'.⁴²⁷ He emphasises the link between academic rigour employing the tools and criticisms of modern Bible scholarship and the personal relationship with the text, engaging with it as a friend and dialoguing with it as a source of

⁴²⁴ Groome, pg 146

⁴²⁵ Westerhoff, John H. 111 pg xv

⁴²⁶ Westerhoff, pgs 12 -15

⁴²⁷ Groome, pg 72

meaning and ethic for life.⁴²⁸ He rejects the notion of hermeneutical praxis (enculturation or socialisation) but proposes a praxis epistemology and a critical praxis; knowledge that is based on reflection and action and not just facts to learn. He sees it in dialectical relationship with intentional socialisation. He declares that it is 'praxis because it is grounded on a pedagogy that engages people about their reflection on their lives in the world. It is also based on the philosophical foundations that honours the integration of the knowledge and the knower and intends connation or wisdom'⁴²⁹ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*). Ostensibly, the different perspectives will also influence the pedagogy.

It is interesting that Westerhoff using the process of enculturation and Groome with his praxis methodology should both generate themes in their work. While Westerhoff's themes are for the process of socialisation, Groome, influenced by Freire uses generative themes agreed by the participants in a learning process to reflect and change their situations. Reddie, influenced by Freire and Groome and Black theology also uses themes in his work. However, he explains that 'the development of Black Christian education is due to Black responses to racial oppression. The main purpose of those who are involved in this is personal and corporate liberation'⁴³⁰ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). He therefore believes that an African-centred interpretative framework or hermeneutic for reading and re-reading Biblical texts is needed.

Pentecostal Faith Formation

Bearing in mind that Pentecostals have not articulated a theory of faith formation, how do these reconcile with a Pentecostal perspective on faith? With varying views on faith formation, how is one to make sense of this within a Pentecostal church where the majority of the members are Black and there is a cultural history of dissonance? While Fowler's and

⁴²⁸ Groome, pgs 80 -82

⁴²⁹ Groome pg 133

⁴³⁰ Reddie, pg 38

Groome's epistemology would not sit comfortably with Pentecostal epistemology, the work of Cheryl Bridges John and John K Smith are important in giving a Pentecostal perspective but does not combine a Black perspective. However, Smith notes that 'Pentecostal theology is rooted in an affective, narrative epistemology'⁴³¹ (*Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*). This emphasis on the affective narrative theology can be traced to Pentecostalism's 'deep roots in Black Spirituality which developed after the Civil War'⁴³² (*Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*). However, as Smith points out, this reliance on the affective is not 'antirational, but antirationalist; it is not a critique or rejection of reason as such but rather a commentary on a particular reductionist model of reason and rationality, a limited stunted version of what counts as 'knowledge'. If the Pentecostal practice of testimony is a kind of critique of our 'idolatrous reliance on reason,' it's not reason that is the target, but our idolatrous construction of it'.⁴³³ (*Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*) Evidently, these different positions lead to different theories about faith formation.

Reddie is Methodist and therefore does not have a Pentecostal worldview but his work is important from a Black perspective. However, one uniting factor between Groome, Bridges and Reddie is the influence of Paulo Freire⁴³⁴ on their work. Freire developed the concept of conscientization while working with illiterate people in Brazil to indicate the process whereby people recognise the social, political and economic contradictions in reality and to take action to transform their situations⁴³⁵ (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*). While Freire did not espouse any Christian views at the time of developing these ideas, he has influenced liberation theologians and his methods have been used by a number of people. Groome's shared praxis approach is influenced by Freire's theories of education. In attempting to demonstrate how aspects of Pentecostalism relate to the meaning of conscientization, Bridges Johns argues that at its

⁴³¹ Smith James K. A. pg 12

⁴³² Bridges Johns Cheryl: pg 67

⁴³³ Smith James K. A. pg 53

⁴³⁴ Freire, Paulo *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

⁴³⁵ Ibid pg 17

inception 'Pentecostalism had a dual prophetic role: denouncing the dominant patterns of the status quo and announcing the patterns of God's kingdom'⁴³⁶ (*Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*). Hollenweger also describes Pentecostalism as a movement of social transformation⁴³⁷ (*Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*). Reddie combines the liberation aspects with Black theology to develop his Black Christian education of liberation. In his case, he asserts that in the title, the term Black relates to the prophetic, liberationist aspects which share God's concern for the marginalized and oppressed as demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the same way that Bridges Johns viewed Pentecostalism as denouncing the status quo Reddie posits that the world view of the prophetic stance is shaped by a commitment to the Kingdom of God, which is the reversal of existing social norms. He also argued that the term also reflects the cultural, social and historical experiences and expressions of faith of African peoples globally⁴³⁸ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*).

Thus the issue of faith formation within a Black Pentecostal church such as COGIC will depend on the particular stance of the church. Whilst it may be assumed that the church would have a prophetic role in speaking to marginalised people, the methods or strategies used may not be those associated with liberation and Black theology. In trying to answer criticism of those who think of the movement as sectarian, Bridges John has pointed out that 'Like David in Saul's armour, second-and third-generation Pentecostals have tried to fit into Evangelical approaches to hermeneutics, education and worship'⁴³⁹ (*Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*). Reddie has highlighted the radical role of the Black churches in countering racism and Black dehumanisation but has noted that despite this, 'many Black churches and Christians that have emerged from them, whether in the US or in the Caribbean or

⁴³⁶ Bridges Johns pg 69

⁴³⁷ Hollenweger, pg 33

⁴³⁸ Reddie, pgs 38 -39

⁴³⁹ Bridges Johns, C pg 7

Britain, have remained wedded to a form of nineteenth century White Evangelism⁴⁴⁰ ('Re-Imaging, Re-Thinking and Re-Doing' in: *Shier-Jones A (ed.) Children of God*). However, Leonard Lovett, a COGIC minister in the USA has argued that liberation goes hand in hand with Pentecostal encounter.⁴⁴¹ How then is faith formed within COGIC in general and especially in COGIC UK?

Faith Formation within COGIC

The Church of God in Christ Annual Commentary (Historic Edition 2014 to 2015) written to commemorate the 150th birthday of the founder) for the Adult Sunday School affirms that 'The Church of God In Christ is a Trinitarian Pentecostal-holiness denomination. The Church believes and teaches that there are three works of grace (salvation, sanctification, and Spirit baptism) that God bestows on believers. This is often testified by COGIC members in an affirmation: "I am saved, sanctified, baptised and filled with the Holy Ghost". The Church is considered Protestant and identified as a classical Pentecostal organisation'.⁴⁴²

Within a Pentecostal church with its emphasis on operating in the gifts of the Spirit, the research into faith formation which assumes that one size fits all is untenable. Both classical Pentecostals such as COGIC and James Fowler refer to stages. However, as they are based on different epistemological foundations, they are not comparable. Therefore, although the believer continues to progress in his or her faith, it is not the kind of development that is proposed by James Fowler. Fowler's proposal, which is constructivist, heavily influenced by psychologists and leaves little room for the Spirit until the final few stages. For people of COGIC, a Holiness /Pentecostal Church, an encounter with and the work of the Holy Spirit is crucial to their beliefs and practices across all age groups.

⁴⁴⁰ Reddie A, (2007) Re-Imaging, Re-Thinking and Re-Doing in: Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God* (Peterborough: Epworth) pg 89

⁴⁴¹ Lovett pg 140

⁴⁴² Church of God In Christ Publishing Board, *Church of God In Christ Annual Commentary 2014 - 2015* (2014) pg xxvii

In COGIC, the first stage of salvation is an acceptance of the gospel message, followed by a continuous process of holiness through prayer and fasting. After sanctification comes the baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues. However, it is emphasised that these are works of grace bestowed by God and therefore not attributable to the believer's achievements. In addition, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not seen as the pinnacle of Christian experience but is for equipping the believer to be more like Jesus and for service. Donald Dayton, in his attempt to trace the theological roots of Pentecostalism showed how the key word in the writings of the early Pentecostals was 'power'. This power was the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and was manifested in the use of gifts of healing⁴⁴³ (*Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*). Bearing this in mind, growth would continue after the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, the emphasis on power and the exercising of spiritual gifts means that the pattern of growth expected for children may not be the same. On the one hand, there is no reason why it should be different as Jesus said to suffer the children to come to him for of such is the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, despite acknowledging the power of the Holy Spirit, it is unclear whether children are seen to be too immature to be empowered by the Holy Spirit because of their development levels i.e. they have not yet acquired the knowledge or understanding of what it means live a life of holiness. Considering that COGIC like many Pentecostals has not articulated a theory of faith formation, the fact that the Church makes provision through Sunday School, the Sunshine Band, the Purity Class, the Youth Department (with Young Men of Valour and Young Women of Excellence programmes) and Young Women's Christian Council indicates that there is an intentional strategy for the faith formation of its children and young people. These programmes operate like rites of passages for children and young people.

Like its parent church in America, COGIC UK also has some agencies that focus specifically on the faith formation of its children; namely Sunday School and Youth meetings. The effectiveness of these may vary within

⁴⁴³ Dayton, Donald W *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (New Jersey: Hendrickson Publishers) 1987 pg 25

the churches but from the literature, particularly that of Groome and Reddie and data from the interviewees, it would seem that these along with other factors play a key role in the formation of faith in children and young people. These, I have drawn out as themes and they are described more fully in the following pages.

Themes

The Agencies of the Church

From the interviews, the Sunday School and Youth Departments provide the context in which children and young people learn the scriptures, preparing the way for conversion. Fowler, writing with May Dell in his later years also admitted the importance of the content of faith. Although referring to stages of faith, they recognise that 'movement in stage advancement is a by-product of teaching the substances and practices of faith'⁴⁴⁴ (*Stages of Faith from Infancy through Adolescence: Reflections on Three Decades of Faith Development Theory*). In COGIC's case, the by-product of teaching in the Sunday School and in Youth meetings has been growth in faith in the participants. Interviewees recounted positive experiences of their time in Sunday School and Youth meetings in response to more than one question. The pivotal role of scripture in bringing about a gradual conversion has already been highlighted in the previous chapter and most participants recognised that conversion was gradual. Somehow, the participants identified their transition phase before commitment as 'being serious', showing an advancement to the next stage of their faith. This occurred in their teenage years and resonates with Fowler's research of conversions occurring mainly during the teenage years. Thus, despite different cultural and theological experiences, the experiences of the participants in COGIC appear to be comparable with others only at the age in which they make their commitment to their faith. It was noted that although the participants valued the activities from the Youth and Sunday School Departments, they did not mention being given an opportunity to make a commitment during this time or being introduced to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the participants identified the

⁴⁴⁴ Fowler and Dell, pg 44

specific role of the Sunday School and Youth Departments in providing experiential learning opportunities for children and young people to engage in ministry in preparation for commitment to their faith at a later date. Some participants also commented on the fact that it was the people in the agencies which were just as or more important than the provision of learning opportunities.

Family

Although some of the participants attributed their faith formation to the support within their natural family, one of the major influences was being raised in church as a church 'family'. The theme of family also included a number of sub themes like the influence of adults, belonging and safety, participation and identity. Firstly, all the participants acknowledged the influence of significant adults in their childhood and early Christian experiences and emphasised that sometimes it was the person who the participants described as 'insignificant', in that s/he was not necessarily an officer, who made all the difference. Observation of being in COGIC for a number of years also confirmed that it was the churches where the children were familiar enough with the adults to call them 'auntie' and 'uncle' knowing that there was a bond in that relationship that attracted more children and young people. One participant explained it thus: 'You didn't feel like an outsider or anything like that ... it was um more sort of I guess a second home, a home away from home everybody knew everybody else and stuff. It felt like part of another family'.⁴⁴⁵ This is not new as the concept of family has been used to describe the collective people of God over the years by Christians. This goes beyond the work of Fowler, Groome and Reddie, although it overlaps to some extent with that of the latter. While Fowler acknowledges the importance of the primary caregivers, his model is individualistic. Groome recognises the importance of meanings derived from the context noting that people are shaped by their environment. Influenced by Black theology, Reddie highlights the collective struggle of Black people. However, the interviewees, with their Pentecostal tradition has conceptualised their experience as familial.

⁴⁴⁵ Interviewee 7 pg 67 lines 2311 – 2314

Thus there are similarities to Westerhoff's model of community. However, in considering how faith is formed within COGIC I would prefer to use the concept 'family orientation' as opposed to community as this is the word used by the participants and it conveys a particular concept of family. Although the word 'family' resonates with the Pentecostal tradition of calling members as brothers and sisters, there is a sense of children being raised in church in a family relationship. One participant explained; 'Like everybody it weren't just people I saw on Sunday ... we grew as a family and even now those people that were there are still there so ... we call ourselves 'family' . So yea I did feel like I belonged'.⁴⁴⁶ The choice of the word 'family' includes the concept of the African personality as rooted in the community and not the Eurocentric view. Akbar explains this collective view of family as 'whatever happened to the individual impacted on the corporate body, the tribe and whatever happened to the tribe reverberated into the individual'⁴⁴⁷ (*The Afrocentric Paradigm: Papers in African Psychology*). With this view there is collective responsibility for the nurture of children's faith and faith is formed within this context.

Additionally, the involvement of the whole family, as in the African proverb of a village raising a child gives children and young people not only a sense of belonging but that of feeling safe. Westerhoff has identified how affiliative faith is nurtured through this sense of belonging and acceptance within one's faith community. Indeed, the interviewees stated that they were engaged in activities from early childhood; singing in the choir, music, Sunday school, tidying up and they felt that they belonged to the church even though they were not yet members. One person added 'I have always attended activities. I can't put an age on it because um my grandma used to conduct the choir and they made me a little choir robe when I was about 4/5 to sit in the choir and attend practices. I have always been involved since I can remember'.⁴⁴⁸ This sense of needing to belong, empowering young people through relevant activities is found in the work of Reddie, who describes them as learning tasks. Reddie also suggested

⁴⁴⁶ Interviewee 6 pg 56 lines 1911 - 1914

⁴⁴⁷ Akbar, pg 68

⁴⁴⁸ Interviewee 4 pg 29 lines 922 -924

that when young people were involved in church and given leadership opportunities, it affirmed their self esteem⁴⁴⁹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). Although not formally articulated as a learning strategy, in COGIC the children and young people are given tasks that prepare them for ministry and they value them as such. Groome's idea of engaging the whole being resonates with the expressive forms of activities in which they participate.

Thus an important contributor in the formation of faith within COGIC is having this sense of belonging. This allows young people to stay in church until they made a commitment as required by the church to start on their spiritual journey. This commitment might be very different from those who believe that children are already in the kingdom⁴⁵⁰ (*Children and the Holy Spirit*). The majority of the participants reported that although they might be able to point to a particular day in which they made a definite decision to follow Jesus, their conversion was gradual. They believed that it was against the backdrop of what they had previously learnt in church. In an atmosphere where people felt they belonged, it was easier to stay within the church. Although one could argue that they were just being carried along by the family atmosphere, at some point they had to make a commitment to their faith and each participant confirmed how they did this. Therefore, collectively the adults take on mentoring or facilitating roles to support children and young people until Christ is fully formed in them. As within a family, where children are given meaningful roles, the children in church are given activities and tasks that are meaningful to them and valued by the adults and children; not just given to keep them quiet. Thus it also affirms them as young people and reinforces their sense of belonging.

Moreover, this early participation in church family life also helps to form a corporate identity. When one examines the concept of identity, it is very clear that it does not take place in a vacuum. The development of a positive identity in young people is often closely linked to the influence of

⁴⁴⁹ Reddie, *nobodies to Somebodies*, pg 151-152

⁴⁵⁰ Leach, Chris *Children and the Holy Spirit* (Eastbourne, Kingsway Publications) 2001 pg 35

influential adults or mentors; the presence of adults alone is not enough. One of the issues for some young people is the lack of identity. The reason for criminal behaviour especially within the Black community is often given as evidence of this. While some may lack this identity, there are some within COGIC who recognise that their experience of church has helped to form their identity; a COGIC identity. The foundation of this identity is laid through the early positive experiences of church family life. This could be compared to the foundation stage described by both Westerhoff and Fowler where children unconsciously copy the faith practices of significant adults. In the same way that Erikson,⁴⁵¹ (*Childhood and Society*), argued that children either learn to trust or mistrust from the reactions of their primary caregivers, so the early positive interactions with significant adults in church affect children's growth in faith. This is especially important if there is a different culture at home. Therefore, although there is no official strategy, where this orientation is done intuitively as in a family, it is effective. Influenced by Erikson, Fowler acknowledges the development of identity especially within the teenage years and conversion that occurs around this time. Reddie emphasises that as Black Christians, identity in Christ should not be separated from that of being a Black person. While the participants were conscious of having a Christian or even a COGIC identity, some were ambivalent about articulating a Black Christian identity. Some felt that it would have helped if the church had highlighted Black issues when they were growing up in predominantly White schools; others felt that it did not matter. It was unclear whether growing up in a predominantly Black church where they felt a sense of belonging was enough and there were two who expressed the view that the church should get out of the ghetto of a Black church. Despite differences in whether this identity was as a Black Christian or a Christian, the interviewees were united in the role of prayer and bible reading in supporting their growth.

⁴⁵¹ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*

Prayer, Fasting and Bible Reading

Anderson, Hollenweger and Bridges John have pointed out the encounter with the Spirit and knowledge that engages the whole body lived in obedience to God's known will as being essential features of Pentecostalism. Thus prayer, fasting and bible reading are the means of grace by which Pentecostals submit to the will of God, grow in holiness and operate in the power gifts. Prayer was mentioned by participants in every question; whether it was the prayers of parents who interceded on their behalf when they were young, prayer or devotional times with the family, attendance at prayer meetings or individual prayers. Prayer was an activity that was introduced or kept going by the family, prayer and fasting was also important in overcoming sin and in strategies for their own growth in faith, holiness and strengthening their commitment to God. As children and people become more serious about their faith or make the transition from participating in activities to commitment to faith, prayer becomes more important as a collective and individual activity. The meetings for prayer and Bible studies are seen as being necessary for growth. Prayer, fasting and bible reading were recurring themes across many of the responses from participants. Although Groome has mentioned prayer as being part of people's lived experience, he does not outline how this fits in within his approach. It is not surprising that prayer was articulated more by the participants than by the three interlocutors, as Pentecostals encounter God through prayer and their worship experiences.

An alternative pedagogy

In addition to prayer which helps the individual to live in obedience to the Words of God, and an unarticulated strategy, how then did these participants learn what was expected? One person explained that 'my development from that Wednesday night was solely based on that conviction and my continual participation in the church.... it wasn't really any in-depth training apart from what I picked up from Sunday school and

taking part in the YP group and such like'.⁴⁵² Of the three interlocutors, Anthony Reddie is the only one who suggests that an alternative pedagogy might account for this. While Groome tries to distance himself from the scientific based Eurocentric epistemology of Fowler's model by acknowledging other epistemologies, his praxis methodology focuses on analytical remembering and creative imagination and the 'whole mind' in a pedagogy that honours and engages people's whole being',⁴⁵³ (*Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*), it does not account for this experience. It is in combining Reddie's idea of the Black worship experience and the Pentecostal epistemology with its roots in Black culture, that the position becomes clearer.

Bridges Johns has noted the role of the church as a teaching community. She concludes that it is the Pentecostal worship context through its setting and liturgies which serve to instruct, exhort and to model the life of faith and is therefore crucial for formation. She explains that 'for Pentecostals, such rituals as singing and testifying carry pedagogical significance. They serve to re-enact, to model and to proclaim the meaning of the Christian life. The context of the worshipping community becomes the place where affective and cognitive aspects are joined together in a powerful manner'⁴⁵⁴ (*Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*). Bridges Johns also highlighted other specific liturgical functions, such as water baptism, communion, foot washing, testimony, healing rituals and spirit baptism and songs and dances which help to initiate and instruct believers⁴⁵⁵ (*Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*). Thus, the Pentecostal experience provides the Black worship experience which is emphasised by Reddie and the engagement of the whole being as highlighted by Groome. Supported by the agencies of the church and rooted in Pentecostal epistemology, faith formation in COGIC follows a

⁴⁵² Interviewee 10 pg 98 lines 3372 -3378

⁴⁵³ Groome, pg 72

⁴⁵⁴ Bridges Johns pg 124

⁴⁵⁵ Bridges Johns, pgs 125 -128

different pattern from that proposed by the developmental model of Fowler.

It is worth noting that many of the participants identified their signs of growth with performance in public ministry; how well they could pray publicly, testify, or exhort (mini sermon); all without formal training. Thus, although seemingly unplanned, formation is occurring through the repetitive practices of the church. Although the COGIC choir has not branched out into the public domain since its initial TV appearances, the 'COGIC sound' is still renowned within the gospel world. Furthermore, in worship services, the music with a mixture of Caribbean rhythm, American and British gospel singing gives an identity that links it with Holiness/Pentecostal churches formed by people of Caribbean descent. Although the worship music of contemporary British artists is prevalent, there is still the Caribbean chorus which is repeated over and over for the story it tells very much like the Caribbean calypso which has lyrics about current affairs. One such chorus might be:

Jesus is my deliverer (x3) I know he delivers me.

How do you know he delivers (x3) I know he delivers me.

From this the leader might add, 'When I am sick he delivers', or 'When I'm in trouble' etc. Thus, through the rhythm of the music, the dancing in the Spirit and repetition of the words, people are engaged with a God of their present circumstances. It is through the expression of worship, through trusting the adults in church and the family and imbibing their worship practices that children in COGIC start on their faith journey. Although the participants varied in their description of growing in faith, the concepts of growing closer to God, getting stronger and spiritual journey indicates a continuous movement in understanding more about the Christian life demonstrated in a change in lifestyle

Militating Factors

Despite this learning environment, some of the participants believed that formal learning opportunities were limited. Some people reported that

there was a lack of time for teaching because of the restrictions of using rented accommodation. Some wanted the doctrines of COGIC presented clearly while others called for solid Bible teaching after baptism and others for the Bible to be presented in a way that was relevant to the lives of children and young people. Although the liturgical practices help to instruct believers, participants did not mention being introduced to or expected to use the power gifts such as healing at an early age. It is possible that children, although active within churches in singing and giving exhortations feel that the real power is for adults and that they are being kept busy until they leave the church or become real Christians. Perhaps for some, the seeds of dissonance are already being sown. The theme of dissonance also appears in Caribbean studies where the historic churches cultivated a culture that prevented slaves from linking the freedom in Christ from freedom from slavery⁴⁵⁶ (*Three Eyes for the Journey – African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience*). This comes through the interviews where it is noted that the church needs to make the teaching of the Bible relevant to the lives of people. Anthony Reddie also explored the theme of exile in his work. Reddie had mentioned that Psalms 137 depicted the cultural and spiritual dissonance of the people enslaved in a foreign land and had used this in his Black liberation materials. The theme of exile is important as my initial reason for embarking on this study was the spiritual and moral dissonance I had noted between young people's behaviour in school and in church. However, this theme of dissonance has not been mentioned by researchers writing from a Black perspective about Pentecostal churches in the United Kingdom. Neither did it appear to be a significant factor in the data from the interviewees. Only one person mentioned that they did not feel as if they quite belonged to the Church as they were not allowed to take the communion before baptism. The focus on adult Baptism means not many children are encouraged to be baptised at an early age and therefore not allowed to take part in communion.

⁴⁵⁶ Stewart, pg 83

Summary

Faith formation in COGIC occurs within a context of family orientation where the church family takes responsibility for the teaching. It takes place across three levels; a pre-conversion participatory walk, post conversion walk and a mature walk. Firstly, at the pre-conversion participatory level, children are actively participating in the life of the church; this corresponds to the results of the interview data 'first steps on a spiritual journey'. Secondly, this is followed by a post-conversion level which correlates with the steady walk from the interview data. Most people come to this stage during their adolescent years although a few may reach there earlier or later. While they may not return to a pre-conversion state, this period will pose some challenges which will allow them to strengthen their feeble knees and then flex their muscles. Like a natural family that adapts to life crises, the church family adapts to support people. Specialist support may take the form of some family members acting as a scaffold that allows repair to a building for a while and then is taken away when it is no longer needed while ongoing support will come through the church's liturgical practices and planned Sunday School and Youth Department programmes. Finally, people move into a more mature walk (corresponding with the interview data) as they support themselves through activities such as prayer, fasting and reading Christian literature. During this time, their commitment to the church and their devotion increases and through managing life crises they will continue their journey of spiritual maturity. The strategy is perhaps effective for some because they are still in the church but maybe needs to be more articulated and made inclusive to cater for a range of needs and people.

Chapter 8: Planning for Faith Formation in COGIC UK: A British Black Pentecostal Pedagogy

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.

(Ephesians 4: 14 NLT)

The aim of this study was to investigate how faith is formed in children and young people within the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) UK and to ascertain whether there was an intentional strategy which was theologically valid to support this. Unlike other studies (for example, Robert Beckford,⁴⁵⁷ (*Dread and Pentecostalism: A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain*), Richard Reddie,⁴⁵⁸ (*Black Muslims in Britain: Why are a Growing Number of Young Black People Converting to Islam?*), which have analysed directly or indirectly, why young people have stopped attending Black Pentecostal/Holiness churches, this research has tried to investigate the internal factors within COGIC that support faith formation. It therefore has to be acknowledged that the investigation is limited in scope as the voices of those who have left the church and could give valuable insights in highlighting factors that militate against faith formation have not been heard. It is hoped that further research will be undertaken with those who have left to contribute to this topic. Nevertheless, this research can lead to strengthening and articulating those positive aspects of faith formation that already exist and although limited, as the first of its kind in the UK, it is useful in considering how faith is formed in COGIC UK. Therefore, engagement with the three interlocutors, (James Fowler, Thomas Groome and Anthony Reddie) was useful in grappling with the concepts of faith formation and in the case of Reddie in considering a Black perspective. The work of both Cheryl Bridges John and James K. A. Smith has been influential in bringing a Pentecostal world view to the debate. The data produced from a limited number of interviews outlining the participants' view of their journey through faith have also added

⁴⁵⁷ Beckford Robert, *Dread and Pentecostalism: A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain* (London, SPCK) 2000

⁴⁵⁸ Reddie, Richard S. *Black Muslims in Britain: Why are a growing number of young Black people converting to Islam?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson) 2009

another dimension to the theoretical work.

Therefore, in a similar vein to James K. A. Smith's thesis that his intention was to articulate a uniquely Pentecostal philosophy rather than encouraging Pentecostals to drink from the wells of wider Christian philosophy so they could become mature,⁴⁵⁹ (*Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*), it is hoped that this task of identifying the uniqueness of Black Holiness/Pentecostal faith formation within the UK. will raise awareness of these factors not only to those responsible for the Christian education of children and young people across the denomination but also to ordinary members who may not realise how their seemingly insignificant actions can contribute to the faith formation of children. The research illustrates that everyone within the Church community has a role to play in the faith formation of children and young people. The results may also be useful for leaders of other Holiness/Pentecostal denominations who are interested in investigating the faith formation of children and young people.

The articulation of the faith formation of children and young people may not have been foremost on the minds of the founders of COGIC as the political and social context at the time dictated their priorities. Yet in founding an organisation based on the reading of Scripture from the perspective of poor Black people and on Black slave traditions, the leaders were not differentiating between children and adults. Indeed, Bishop Mason could attest to his coming to faith at a young age within an intergenerational environment. It is therefore possible to surmise that the founders relied on their knowledge of how they had received faith; through transmission of stories from the elders and their experience of 'meeting God' within the prayer services. However, the fact that the first Sunday School was established in 1908, one year after the church became Pentecostal in 1907, followed by the Youth department, Sunshine Band and Purity Classes indicated the Church's awareness that the faith needs of children were different and that age appropriate provision should be

⁴⁵⁹ Smith, J. K. A *Thinking in Tongues* pgs xiv - xv

made for children and young people. The fact that there was an omission of a step-by-step process did not mean that there was not an intention to promote faith formation; it was only that the strategy was not articulated.

It is to their credit that without formal knowledge of Liberation or Black theology, either intuitively or directed by the Holy Spirit, the founders of COGIC offered a radical alternative to the majority culture,⁴⁶⁰ (*Bishop C.H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*), through their interpretation of Scripture from a Black perspective. This correlates with Reddie's promotion of an African centred hermeneutic in the Christian education of Black children in Britain. Although Reddie's proposal may have included the analysis of historical texts, the idea of rereading the Bible from a Black perspective is not something new to COGIC. Furthermore, Mason's insistence that 'a tongue without the practice of breaking down barriers of malice, hatred and prejudice was not true Christianity',⁴⁶¹ (*The Triumph of the Black Church*), and his civil liberties campaign during World War 1,⁴⁶² (*The Triumph of the Black Church*), resonates with the liberating aspect of Black and Liberation theology. It was against this backdrop; a combination of the principles of holiness, spiritual encounter/empowerment and prophetic social consciousness,⁴⁶³ (*Bishop C.H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*), which distinguished it from White Pentecostal hermeneutics that faith was formed in the initial congregants of COGIC USA.

From the growth of the organisation and the people who reported that they were third or fourth generation COGIC members, it is evident that faith continues to be formed. It is unclear whether this alternative paradigm was lost in transportation to the Caribbean where the political and social context had already led to a dissonance in the attitude of Caribbean people towards their African religious heritage⁴⁶⁴ (*Three Eyes for the*

⁴⁶⁰ Clemmons Bishop Ithiel C pg 22

⁴⁶¹ Hill, Elijah pg 70

⁴⁶² Hill, Elijah, pg 117

⁴⁶³ Clemmons Bishop Ithiel C. (Pneuma Publishing, (1997) pg 58

⁴⁶⁴ Stewart, pg 184

Journey – African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience). Therefore, while the influence of Black Spirituality meant that Pentecostalism could be readily accommodated in the Caribbean where there was already a fusion of African religion with Christianity, the Black Pentecostal hermeneutic of Mason was ignored. Thus, In Britain, although being a Black church there is a reluctance of the church to discuss issues that affect the lives of Black young people so that from the 1970s onwards young people have left to affiliate themselves with groups such as Rastafarianism and more recently Islam which address these issues⁴⁶⁵ (*Black Muslims in Britain: Why are a Growing Number of Young Black People Converting to Islam?*). It is this dissonance and perhaps struggle to maintain the status quo which may have led to this literal and colour blind approach to the Bible and lost the alternative radical approach that had been advocated by Mason.

The responses of the participants have indicated that the church has stressed the Pneumatological and Christological aspects inherent within its doctrines; emphasising the holiness and spiritual dimensions without the prophetic social consciousness. Holiness, which involves a change in lifestyle, and praying and fasting for spiritual empowerment have been the hallmarks of COGIC UK. It is possible that I have been attracted to my preferred definition of faith formation as a progression in faith towards God with Jesus Christ as the role model because I associate it with holiness. Indeed, there can be no progression in faith without a change in lifestyle. However, the liberating aspect of Black Pentecostal theology which led, for example, to Mason challenging the segregation laws in the USA, has not been transferred to COGIC UK. Yet it is within the dynamics of a Black, Holiness/Pentecostal and British context that faith has grown and continues to do so. Therefore, the consideration of Reddie's proposal for a Black liberation of Christian education based on among other aspects, a prophetic voice and an African centred hermeneutic, would bring back COGIC UK to its pedagogical origins.

As COGIC consists of mainly a Black constituency, there was also an

⁴⁶⁵ Reddie, Richard pg 8

interest in the interface between culture and faith formation. Thus, one major query at the start of the investigation was whether the experience of faith formation in COGIC would be different from those of other groups. Whilst it is not the premise of this project to investigate the faith formation in all the historic churches, one can observe that in some churches, it is articulated, intellectually focussed, based on research and organised. For example, in the Anglican Church, the fact that there is a diocesan board of education and a number of publications, surveys and reports such as *Children in the Way: New Directions for the Church's Children*⁴⁶⁶ indicate that there is an intentional strategy. Additionally, it has also been noted that the understanding of individuals growing in the church has largely been in terms of intellectual and not spiritual development although the Anglican Church is trying to address this.⁴⁶⁷ Furthermore, while favouring the Pilgrim model⁴⁶⁸ of nurture on an all age basis where children are sometimes followers but sometimes leaders on a journey, the authors of *Children in the Way* have nevertheless outlined insights that could be gleaned from James Fowler and John Westerhoff with a caveat that the stages or styles are not necessarily identified by ages. Moreover, from being initiated into the church through infant baptism there are a number of agencies to support the faith formation of children; from playgroups, Sunday School, confirmation classes, uniformed groups⁴⁶⁹ (*Children in the Way: New Directions for the Church's Children*). However, data from the interviews and literature reveals that Pentecostal formation is different from those of the historic churches and point to among other things, the roots of Pentecostalism in Black Spirituality, the storytelling of the elders, the testimony, prayer and fasting and the familial context of the church.

A British Black Pentecostal Pedagogy

Since Pentecostal formation is different, it is vital that there is an articulation of an intentional strategy. Bridges Johns has emphasised the

⁴⁶⁶ General Synod Board of Education *Children in the Way: New Directions for the Church's Children* (The National Society (Church of England) and Church House Publishing) 1988

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid pg 39

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid pg 75

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid pgs 79 -88

need for Pentecostals to be intentional about faith formation. She advocates that Pentecostals take on 'a critical confessional stance in which there is awareness of and appreciation for the corporate expressions of faith'⁴⁷⁰ or they may be in danger of having to enquire whether their children will have faith (Pentecostal Formation). Kenneth J Archer (A Pentecostal Hermeneutic) has proposed the adoption of a Pentecostal hermeneutic strategy as he feels that the movement 'is now in a position to examine critically its own identity, hermeneutical posture and its relationship to other Christian communities'.⁴⁷¹ He further states that Pentecostals are being called upon by Christian communities to contribute to theological and hermeneutic practice. Therefore, as one of the oldest Pentecostal denominations, it is important that COGIC joins in this critical appraisal of itself which can then lead to a consideration of an intentional strategy of faith formation which is effective and theologically valid.

In order for COGIC to have such a strategy, consideration should be given to a proposal emanating from the themes from the research and influenced in particular by the work of Anthony Reddie. While Reddie has proposed a Black Christian education of liberation, in terms of COGIC, I would argue for a British Black Pentecostal pedagogy. Although it may be useful or adaptable for other places, it would recognise the contextual setting of Pentecostalism within Holiness Pentecostal Churches in Britain where the majority of people are Black. It would be underpinned by four interrelated components; a Pentecostal epistemology, a Black hermeneutic (from Black theology), the action and reflection of a praxis methodology combined with reliance on the Holy Spirit and an attention to the developmental needs of children. A British Black Pedagogy would strengthen and build on the positive aspects of faith formation that already exist within the church such as the family orientation including early positive experiences, belonging, participation; agencies, the liturgical practices, the prayer and fasting and seek to articulate how this can be done. The expressed aims of this approach would be the scriptural

⁴⁷⁰ Bridges Johns (2010) pg 140

⁴⁷¹ Archer (2005) pg 1

mandate to pass on the faith to children and young people so that they would through the power of the Holy Spirit progress 'in faith (a gift from God) towards God with Jesus as their role model'⁴⁷² (Being and Becoming: Adolescence' in Shier-Jones A (ed.) *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*).

Family Orientation: Building Relationships

From the research, the influence of adults and growing up in a church family was seen as a contributory factor in the faith formation of children. Presently, the Church provides the familial context for Black people of Caribbean descent who are trying to live out their faith in a country where they are an ethnic and religious minority. There is no dichotomy between the culture of home and Church for those young people who attend COGIC churches. In fact, while they are in church, they are in a majority setting. Whilst some in the historic churches would struggle with the 'family model' of Christian nurture as it gives a feeling of superiority,⁴⁷³ (*Children in the Way: New Directions for the Church's Children*), the different understanding of family from an African perspective of personality, (from the extended family to households headed by single women) does not present the same challenges in the Caribbean community. In considering the theme of family, the first aspect of this pedagogy therefore would be to adopt a whole Church approach for the building of relationships within the Biblical and African concept of family. Using a praxis approach of reflection and action which stresses the need to rely on the Holy Spirit, the Church would consider what it means to be a Black church family that values children made in the image of God.

Through reflecting on the scriptures relating to families and linking them to their own experiences, the Church would begin an ongoing process that would simultaneously entail the strengthening of family relationships in three areas; between children and adults, among natural families and among church members. Similar to how Fowler has highlighted the role of the primary caregivers in the faith of a child, so the role of the Church in

⁴⁷² Bryan J, (2007) pg 140

⁴⁷³ Children in the Way, pg 32

supporting the faith of children as they start on their spiritual journey is important. Communication of this is essential to the whole Church as participants have emphasised that it was sometimes, the person in the background who was instrumental in supporting them. It would validate this area of ministry within the Church. The focus would be on all children and teams of people would be assigned to all children, not on a formal basis such as mentoring, but informally as trained encouragers with the opportunity of reviewing the role regularly with a coordinator who would have oversight of all the teams and children. The teams would have the tasks of ensuring that all children have positive experiences of engaging in tasks and activities that are age appropriate and meaningful within the Church.

Building of relationships would also extend to natural families as families are also considered to be important in supporting the growth of the children. These would not be parenting classes but group time with trained facilitators to explore issues of family life, so that people could begin to take action in their own situations and homes with the help of a supportive group. For this to be done effectively, the process could be supported by concepts of story linking from Anthony Reddie, Anne Wimberley (connecting components of everyday life with scripture to live in the image of Christ in their present lives) and Evelyn Parker (using) personal and archetypal stories). Thus stories from the Bible and those of families in the community and around the world could be woven with theirs to make the story their own. Linked to this would be the building of relationships in Church between people as they also learn what it means to be a Church family. As Sunday School takes place separately before the main Church meetings on Sunday, both children and adults are accustomed to all aged services. However to support this, consideration would need to be given as to how children are included in these meetings. To further support this, a range of intergenerational activities would be planned including storytelling from the elders and the young people also interviewing older people. As members of the church family, the leaders in the Sunday School and Youth Departments would also be involved in training in

building relationships but will need some specifically geared to their role of working with children.

Strengthening the agencies – Youth and Sunday School Departments

Both the adults and the activities offered in these two departments were considered to be positive influences in the faith formation of participants. However, while incorporating some of the activities that the departments offer and recognising that they have been instrumental in giving children and young people their first experience of ministry, in keeping with the British Black Pentecostal pedagogy, an alternative curriculum which affirms a Pentecostal epistemology would also be offered. The aim would be to bridge the gap between a) the learning experience of children in the main Sunday meeting and that which takes place in Sunday School and (b) between their faith and everyday lives. To strengthen these departments, the introduction of a Pentecostal epistemology would be combined with a praxis approach with games and exercises to enhance learning. The verbalisation of a Pentecostal epistemology (which is already present within the main church meetings) is not a rejection of rationality but affirms that there are other forms of knowledge which are accessible besides cognitive propositional knowledge. There are some things that cannot be articulated in words; we 'know that we know that we know'⁴⁷⁴ (*Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*). Moreover, using a praxis approach demonstrates that although there is a commitment to knowledge in the affective domain, the opportunity to reflect indicates that it is not the promotion of anti – intellectualism. Formalising this would demonstrate to children and young people that this knowledge is something of which they can be proud while using other forms of knowledge for societal purposes. Most young people live in a dual world of home/school, home/society and the use of different language styles, e.g. the Jamaican dialect which they use as a counter sub-culture is an indication of this. It is through the acceptance and use of knowledge forms such as dreams and visions that the pioneers of Pentecostalism were able to reach out and accept the power gifts of the Holy Spirit. In addition, the emphasis on knowledge as

⁴⁷⁴ Bridges Johns pgs 35 -36

engaging the whole of one's being and submitting to God would also affirm to children that it is possible to make a commitment at an early age and that they do not have to wait until they are older to operate in the power gifts as these are not limited to adults. Introducing a Pentecostal epistemology would therefore not only bridge the gap between the main Church and Sunday School but between their faith and their everyday lives.

It is within the areas of Youth and Sunday School ministry that children and young people are given their first platform for public ministry. The introduction of an alternative curriculum would include as in Black theology and in Groome's model, a theme based approach. Some of the themes such as identity, belonging or exile, participation, family have already been identified from the interviews in this research. Using a thematic approach would also facilitate the linking of Sunday school, main church and their own lives. They would not be passive recipients but would be engaged in discovering the role of testimony and how to make the story their own and bring about action. Incorporating a praxis methodology, based on reflection, would not only bridge the gap between faith and everyday practice but would give children and young people the tools to begin to think socially and politically and perhaps become involved in wider societal and community issues which impact on their lives. However, unlike Groome's approach, there would be some parameters as there are some absolutes based on the truth claims of Jesus in Pentecostal theology and also the basis of an encounter with God. This approach would need to be communicated at national level with training for ministers so that they can support teachers and youth leaders.

Training for teachers would be included in this approach along with the availability of resource materials to support teachers to enable children and young people to put them in the story so that they are actively engaged with the God of the gospel message. The materials would need to be readily accessible to teachers to ensure that the programme was effective. An adaptation of some of Anthony Reddie's materials in *'Growing into Hope Volumes 1 and 2'* would be a starting point but there

would be a team collecting resources and supporting the church in writing and producing its own materials including using the photographs of the congregation and the children with parental permission. Reddie found that rewriting Biblical texts to incorporate the language styles of young people helped their self esteem. As well as the use of their language styles, using the photographs of familiar people in published work would also build self esteem and give the children a positive identity.

Furthermore, this approach would also consider the developmental needs of children and young people. This would not be a staged approach as Fowler's but recognition that although faith is a gift from God, the Holy Spirit will also work with the children at their level and any pedagogy should take account of this. Although Fowler's work has been criticised as forms of knowing, his work is helpful in considering the concepts at different ages. Therefore an approach that requires reflection and action would recognise their developmental ages; the power of the imagination and the level of their reasoning skills. Materials would therefore need to be produced at different ages of development and the adults would need to consider age appropriate language while at the same time relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of the children.

Liturgical Practices

A British Black Pentecostal pedagogy would articulate the importance of the worship experience of the church in formulating and deepening the faith of children and young people. James K. A. Smith has highlighted the central role that testimony plays 'in the shape of gathered worship and in the narration of one's identity in Christ'⁴⁷⁵ (*Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*). Although the religious identity of children and young people in COGIC is being formed through the oral tradition of using storytelling; through the preacher or a testimony which revisits corporate and familial narratives which are fused 'with scripture to understand the past, present and remake the future',⁴⁷⁶ (*Soul Stories: African American Christian Education*), this is unarticulated.

⁴⁷⁵ Smith, James K. A. Pg xxii

⁴⁷⁶ Wimberley

Using the worship experience as an intentional strategy would mean communicating the purpose of the testimony and the storytelling to the whole church so that they recognise the significance of these activities. Those who are planning the worship sessions would therefore seek to incorporate them as learning activities and create the space to allow for different levels of participation; some pre-planned and some spontaneous.

The focus would only be on the narrative but also on highlighting the expressive nature of Black spirituality which includes worshipping not only with the mind and lips but with all of the body; dancing, handclapping, foot stumping, singing and the use of instruments such as tambourines. Thus musical forms of expression which are relevant to the young people would be encouraged including rapping.

Prayer, Fasting and Bible Reading

Pentecostal theology affirms a knowledge that is rooted in an encounter with God. It is through prayer and fasting that Pentecostals reach out to operate in the power gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thus a British Black pedagogy would also be underpinned by prayer. This is an acknowledgement that the approach is dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit working through the individuals who use it in order to succeed. Thus it will be launched through prayer and will need ongoing prayer support from not only a dedicated team but from the churches in their prayer meetings and from individuals. Prayer will continue to be stressed as a means of grace to grow in holiness and for submission to the will of God.

Furthermore, a Black Pentecostal praxis or pedagogy would have as its centre the liberating aspects of a Black hermeneutic of re-reading the Bible as advocated by Reddie, from a perspective which reflects the present daily lives of Black British people. This hermeneutical approach is now embedded in Black theology which moves beyond the usual sources of theology as scripture, revelation and tradition, to include Black history, Black culture and Black experience ⁴⁷⁷(*A Black Theology of Liberation*). It has already been demonstrated that this Black hermeneutical approach

⁴⁷⁷ Cone, pg 24

was used by the founders of COGIC and thus the church would be returning to its roots. It is a strategy which should be used by the whole church in Bible Studies and in sermons. Moreover, by using the Caribbean vernacular of most of the people for telling of stories it reaffirms the language of the elderly and the self esteem of young people who use this as an alternative way of communicating.

This would correlate with the issue of identity which was a theme from the interviews. Employing a Black hermeneutical approach would not only emphasise an identity in Christ but also their identity as a person of the African Diaspora living in this country. Although some of the present participants did not feel that was important, for others it may have supported them or given them a sense of purpose. However, Richard Reddie chronicles how disaffection with the church in the 1970s led some people to join the Rastafarian movement; in later years others joined the Nation of Islam and more recently some are converting to Islam⁴⁷⁸ (*Black Muslims in Britain: Why are a Growing Number of Young Black People Converting to Islam?*). Anthony Reddie argues that the Rastafarian movement was not only a voice of cultural and political protest of disaffected and marginalised youth but it made them 'feel they had a legitimate place in society, and gave them confidence to reject the status quo and the biased self-serving thoughts of mainstream society. Moreover, it gave comfort and justification to the distinctive otherness of Black identity and experience'⁴⁷⁹ (*Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*). The same can be said for why some people join other faiths. Therefore the church has to recognise that although it has been successful in retaining a group of 'COGIC Babies', others may have left because their identity as a Black person had not been affirmed within the church. Anthony Reddie contends that 'the development of Christian faith amongst Black youth (in fact all Black and oppressed people) cannot be separated from the notion of one's individual self-identity as a (Black) person. The former must not become a

⁴⁷⁸ Reddie, Richard S. *Black Muslims in Britain*

⁴⁷⁹ Reddie Anthony, *Nobodies to Somebodies* pg 28

convenient excuse to attack or deny the latter'.⁴⁸⁰ (*Nobodies to Somebodies A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation*) Therefore, Black self identity is an important aspect of this process.

Recommendations

To advocate a British Black Pentecostal praxis or pedagogy would not be divisive but would acknowledge the contributions of our founders. It was noted that both Seymour and Mason had multiracial congregations while combining aspects of slave religion in their movements. It has been said that it was their 'zeal for Wesleyan perfectionism and their militant defence of slave worship practices the rest of the Black church sought to forget',⁴⁸¹ (*Bishop C.H Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*), that enabled the founders to start COGIC. Often in planning for the needs of one group, it has benefitted other groups as has been my experience in working in the area of special educational needs or in working on summer camp from a Black church in the community where the number of whites equalled or outnumbered the Blacks. Therefore in planning effectively for the needs of its children and young people, there is always the possibility that other ethnic groups may be attracted. Most of the recommendations are subsumed above in advocating a British Black Pentecostal praxis or pedagogy. However, I will summarise these briefly.

Theology

British Black Pentecostal pedagogy would mean an education and examination of Pentecostal theology, epistemology and Black theology including Black hermeneutics. These ideas would be a challenge to the established ways of thinking and working but there are forums within the Church (the Bible College and Ministers' retreat) where these educational programmes and discussions can begin to take place. However, it would need to be broached with prudence so that it does not alienate those who are not accustomed to discussing these issues. A history of the Church with particular reference to the methods used by the early pioneers could

⁴⁸⁰ Reddie, Anthony pg 33

⁴⁸¹ Clemmons pg 21

be an introduction. This would enable the church to examine and understand its theological position and epistemological stance as a Holiness/Pentecostal Church. This would not only mean the church returning to its roots but would allow it to distinguish between the theological and cultural practices and to consider the interface between the two. A praxis (reflection action) approach could be useful in facilitating it to examine its epistemological and pedagogical positions, purpose and role within the British context and in terms of supporting children, place any research on faith formation alongside this present one. Since Pentecostal faith formation is different from the historic churches, COGIC should plan strategically for this in worship sessions and in its liturgy instead of hoping that it will happen.

Having considered its theological position, the Church should begin to articulate it. In doing so, it would be necessary to come to terms with the reality of being a Black church. One interviewee suggested that COGIC should appeal to the wider community and get out of the stereotype of being a Black Church.⁴⁸² The tone of the interviewee suggested that there was a stigma attached to being a Black Church and appeared to be suggesting that having a few white people or those from other ethnic groups might give the Church some credibility. Thus, such deliberations could occur within a solid theological framework. Ostensibly, members of COGIC UK are aware that it is a Pentecostal Church before taking up membership. Most would quote the events on the day of Pentecost as their Biblical foundation. While that remains true, very little is articulated about the nature of Pentecostalism or its history. The stories of how Caribbean immigrants to Britain were treated when they first visited the historic churches and the establishment of Black Churches are narrated but the struggles of the founders to offer an alternative radical hermeneutics is omitted. The prophetic social consciousness of C. H. Mason needs to be juxtaposed alongside holiness and spiritual empowerment so that people become engaged in changing their situations. From this a British Black Pentecostal pedagogy could therefore be implemented.

⁴⁸² Interviewee 8 lines 2993 -2294 pg 87

Education/Training

Although this approach is aimed at strengthening some of the things that are already happening, the articulation of this might leave some people feeling uncomfortable. In order for this strategy to be effective, education and training would be necessary at every level, from ministers, Youth and Sunday school leaders, Worship leaders, encouragers and the whole church family as they embrace the concepts of building relationships as a family on different levels and facilitating the faith formation of children and young people. It is important that education and training is given so that the approach can be employed in the pre- conversion participatory period through Sunday School and Youth Departments at a time when identity is being shaped. In addition, during the post-conversion period, a systematic programme would also be offered to new converts and those about to take membership.

Themes

The results of the interviews, supported by literature, suggest that faith is formed within a family orientation structure where people live out practically what is meant by family. Although this concept of family is not new as the universal Church is described as the family of God, it is this concept of family with the whole Church taking responsibility for the support of children which has influenced the way faith is formed within COGIC. Most of the themes are located under the umbrella term of family. It is therefore important that COGIC makes a stance both nationally and internationally in articulating how it makes disciples. In doing so, the factors, such as family orientation, belonging, participating and identity can be formalised and shared among its people. As the family is never perfect, nor is it static but is striving for perfection, so the articulation of this theme through the relationship building programme would be supportive in all areas of the church. As a praxis approach is used, so the relationship building programme would overlap with the other themes from this study such as the worship sessions, prayer and fasting and Bible reading and the distribution of tasks for children. It is also expected that in keeping with

a praxis approach, more themes would be generated by the congregants in the church in the future.

Summary

Despite the lack of an articulated plan, members of COGIC UK, like their counterparts in the United States, have been proud to affirm that they are second and third generations of this church. This has allowed them to move through a pre-conversion participatory period, then a post-conversion period before moving on to maturity. The term 'period' is not static or distinct and can last for a number of years until a child confesses Christ as Lord. Terms like levels which give the idea of a staged process such as Fowler's have been avoided. Although Fowler's proposal that faith moves in discrete invariable stages is rejected, his contribution has been in the consideration of adjusting materials to account for the developmental levels of children and young people.

It is during this pre-conversion participatory period where family orientation is very important in helping children to feel a sense of belonging and form an identity. Children and young people are more likely to continue on through the next period if they have the support of the church community raising them as a village does the child. The importance of this period is borne out by research into why people are leaving the church and turning to other faiths. In researching why so many Black young people were converting to Islam, Richard Reddie,⁴⁸³ (*Black Muslims in Britain: Why are a Growing Number of Young Black People Converting to Islam?*), concluded that the majority of Muslim converts had come from Christian backgrounds and had attended church on a regular basis. He explained that his research did not discover men and women 'who had been active or 'born again' Christians and had abandoned the cross for the crescent. Indeed, most were never at that point where they seriously considered committing their lives to Jesus. What the research did find was that a number had family members, parents in particular, who were committed Christians – in many instances they were leaders or pastors in churches'.

⁴⁸³ Reddie, Richard S. pg 213

⁴⁸⁴ One can assume therefore that they left the church at this pre-conversion participatory period. It also demonstrates as supported by interview data that children born in the church can remain there for a long time; progressing through childhood into late adolescence without making that commitment to faith. It is unclear, since that was not the remit of that particular research, whether those who left ever had the opportunity to participate in meaningful church activities. While valuing the activities from the Youth and Sunday School Departments, none of the participants in this research mentioned being given an opportunity to make a commitment during this time or being introduced to the power gifts of the Holy Spirit. (This is an area that could be investigated by further research with a larger population sample). It is possible that if this period is handled with sensitivity, there would not be this disconnect between church and lifestyle which motivated this research.

According to research in America from the Barna Group,⁴⁸⁵ half of all people make their commitment to Christ before the age of 13 and 2 out of 3 do so before their 18th birthday. This is also the time, Erikson,⁴⁸⁶ (*Childhood and Society*), indicates that children are forming their identity. From the response of the interviewees, the average age for those who make this commitment is 16 to 18. Although this trend appears to be more in keeping with the latter, those in COGIC are already engaged in faith based activities and are not new to faith experiences. This also indicates that this pre-conversion participatory period can last a very long time and demonstrates the importance of this time in decision making for children and young people.

The pre-conversion period is marked by participatory activities, having a sense of belonging and forming identity. This sense of belonging is also important after conversion but children and young people will need to feel secure in this first before wanting to become members and stay within the church. The question therefore is how can the church better support the

⁴⁸⁴ Reddie, R S pg 213

⁴⁸⁵ <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/5-barna-update/196-evangelism-is-most-effective-among-kids> 2004

⁴⁸⁶ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*

faith formation of children and young people. Therefore, what can COGIC UK do in order to have an intentional strategy?

COGIC would need to consider a systematic approach i.e. a British Black Pentecostal pedagogy with the four components previously mentioned. This intentional strategy would include the building of relationships as a whole church approach and include specific educational and training programmes at different levels for families, children and workers. However, more importantly, this approach through the use of themes would also demonstrate the relationship of the doctrines of the Church and the Statement of Faith with everyday life. Mentoring and the following up of the new converts would also be imperative. It is possible that a systematic programme would stop some of our young people from leaving the church and enable them not only to make a commitment earlier but to live a consistent Christian lifestyle.

Nevertheless, one cannot forget that a number of children and young people have found faith within the church and continue until this day. The factors, which this study has identified, can be formalised and implemented systematically to make the process of faith formation smoother for all within COGIC.

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Appendix 1

Topics for semi – structured interview

1. Background Information

- Name, age, gender, COGIC church (written record – not to be taped)

2. Time in the Church of God in Christ:

- At what age did you start attending, activities (Sunday school, church etc)? What are your earliest memories of church?
- Was there a specific time in your church experience that you decided to make the commitment to become a Christian?
- Was this decision made after thinking about it over a period of time or was it a Damascus Road experience?
- What caused you to become a Christian? Do you think that they were any particular influences?
- Did you have any specific classes/teaching e.g. New Believers' Classes/Baptism classes
- When were you baptised? How long was that after you became a Christian?
- When were you received into membership and did you have any preparation classes for membership?
- As a child, did you have any sense of belonging to the church or being a member before being given the right hand of fellowship?
- What difference did it make in receiving the right hand of fellowship?

3. Growing in faith or faith formation

- What does growing in faith mean to you?
- Based on 2 Peter 3; 18, what do you think are the signs of growth?
- How is growth measured? How do you know that you are growing in faith?
- ***Holiness and sanctification are stressed in COGIC. What does each mean? How are they connected to growing in faith? (To be asked if not mentioned by participants).***
- Is your faith stronger than it was 10 years ago? In what ways?
- Do you feel more committed to God – to church? How is that commitment demonstrated?
- How often do you attend church? Sundays/midweek and which midweek services/conventions etc.

- What is the importance of the Lord's Supper to you? How does it support you in your growth in faith?

4. Support in growing in faith

- What agencies of the church supported your growth and how; i.e. Sunday school, Youth meetings, Children's church, Bible Study, Prayer meeting, Worship Service, preaching, exhortation, testimony, others
- Were there any people that helped you to grow in faith?
- What role did your family play in the growth of your faith? E.g. family devotions, values etc.

5. Challenges

- Have you experienced any personal challenges to your faith; e.g. how do you overcome sin, have you had experience of having to cope with long term illnesses?
- Were there any times that you felt unsupported or experienced a lack of understanding by individuals or the church as a whole?
- Were there any things that hindered your growth?

6. Individual responsibilities/Strategies for discipleship

- What strategies do you use to support your own growth? Do you have a daily devotion and how would you describe it? Prayer, meditation, Bible reading,
- Do you use other literature besides the Bible and if so what sort? Daily readings, books/pamphlets
- Do you follow or have you undertaken any specific courses to help you in your growth as a Christian?
- Do you visit other churches or attend special meetings with the aim of helping you to grow in your faith?

7. Statement of Faith/Doctrines of COGIC

- How familiar are you with the Statement of faith? Can you say it without looking at it or can you summarise it?
- Can you name the main doctrines of COGIC?
- How important are the Statement of faith and Doctrines of the COGIC in your everyday life and to your growth in faith

8. Roles /responsibilities in church

- What responsibilities do you have in Church? i.e. Sunday school teacher, youth leader, van driver etc

9. The church's role in raising and supporting you to deal with wider issues

- Do you think the church has equipped you to engage with wider issues in society? E.g. everyday issues relating to black Christians/people in society such as racism at school/work, politics, etc
- As a church with a mainly black constituency, has COGIC highlighted topics such as the Black presence in the Bible, Black contribution to Christianity etc. Do you such think topics would have supported your growth in faith?
- Do you think that the church should be more involved in community projects alongside its religious functions?

10. Future actions for the church

- What do you think the church can do to support spiritual growth and development?

Appendix 2 (personal addresses removed)

17th August 2012

Dear Bishop, Superintendents and Pastors

Re: REP (EM)/11/12-55 Black Christian faith formation in Holiness/Pentecostal Churches in the UK

I am conducting some research on how children and young people grow in their faith. As part of this research, I am looking for volunteers who would be prepared to be interviewed about their experiences of growing in faith. In particular, I would like to interview people who have been 'born' in the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) or have been attending from the time they were infants.

The interviews will take place during August to December and will last for about an hour. Those who volunteer will be given exact times and location of the interviews. They will take place in one of the COGIC churches.

I will be making further announcements at one of the Conventions and asking those who are interested to meet me in one of the side rooms where I will explain the purpose of the project in more detail. Those who are interested will be given an information sheet to read before making up their minds.

Please bring this to the attention of your members and ask them to listen out for the notices in convention. As this is a personal project, there is no pressure whatsoever to participate.

Thanks in advance

Esther Fenty

Appendix 3

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS



REC Reference Number: REP (EM)/11/12-55

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Black Christian Faith Formation within Holiness/Pentecostal Churches in the UK

We would like to invite you to participate in this postgraduate research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The aim of the research is to investigate how people grow in their faith within Holiness /Pentecostal churches in the UK. I am expecting that the results will be of benefit to churches with a Holiness/Pentecostal background but I am limiting the investigation to the Church of God in Christ, (COGIC). The project has arisen out of my interest in Christian education and the church has not asked me to do this. Nevertheless, I am hoping that COGIC will be interested in the results which may yield enough information to formulate a theory of faith formation within COGIC. From this, one could identify approaches which will support children and young people to grow in their faith. Practical outcomes could be the development of curricula materials for the Sunday School and Youth Departments.

I am therefore recruiting people over the age of 18 who are members of COGIC and who have been attending church from infancy. This is because you will be asked to reflect on those experiences over the years.

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to take part in an individual semi structured interview. The interviews will be carried out between June and December 2012 and will last for about an hour. They will take place in one of the rooms of our churches but the exact location will be given when I know who has volunteered. It is possible that it could be in your own church or one that is nearest to you. Interviews will be recorded, subject to your permission.

The questions will be about your experience of faith; how the different agencies in church have helped you to grow, any literature that has been helpful etc, your experience as a black person in a black church.

The questions are designed to enable you to talk freely about your faith but if you feel uncomfortable at any time you are free to withdraw. Participants will be given a copy of the summary of the results.

I will take the personal details before beginning the interview. These handwritten notes will be kept in a locked cupboard which no one will have access to. The tapes will be coded and transcribed by a person who I used to work with on a professional basis and she is not a member of COGIC.

Recordings of interviews will be deleted upon transcription. No one will be able to identify you from the information.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. In addition to withdrawing yourself from the study, you may also withdraw any data/information you have already provided up until it is transcribed for use in the final report (31st December 2013)

- Name and contact details of the researcher: Esther Fenty esther.fenty@kcl.ac.uk

If this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information: Dr Philip Barnes Philip.barnes@kcl.ac.uk

Appendix 4

Thematic Analysis of All Responses from Participant 1

Questions	Response	Code
<p>Question 2 At what age did you start attending, activities (Sunday school, church etc)? What are your earliest memories of church?</p>	<p><i>At the age of 6</i> OK was that Sunday School <i>Sunday School yes</i> And main church <i>Mainly used to be Sunday School until probably until I was about 11/12 then I started to attend main service</i> ok so what are your earliest memories of church</p> <p><i>Going to Sunday School I do remember at a young age going to Sunday School and being picked up in the Sunday School van by a guy called V and he used to pick me up every Sunday and my teacher was Sister S...and Sister J... Brown and Sister B you know they used to be my teachers as well as Bro B... he used to be my teacher and I do remember the late Bishop Bell growing up Superintendent Edwards I did know of but I can't remember him Bishop McLachlan you know but I do know of him there is a lot at Sunday School used to talk about him a lot Elder S...was also at the Church</i> But Bishop McLachlan wasn't around then <i>No no he wasn't</i> Just to confirm Bishop McLachlan was the first Bishop in England</p>	<p>Experience of Sunday School Main church much later</p> <p>Being picked up-van driver-teachers</p> <p>Remembering pioneers of the church</p>
<p>Was there a specific time in your church experience that you decided to make the commitment to become a Christian?</p>	<p><i>Um I think really um always been involved in the church, and my mum, my natural mum, who died when I was 11 she was a Christian and she used to sit down with us and kneel down with us at the bed and used to pray with us and I always remember my mum speaking in tongues you know and calling everybody she was particularly concerned about my older brother and he was always the main topic of all her prayers because he was a little wild (laugh ha ha ha) but</i></p>	<p>Always involved Mother-died when No 1 was 11, Christian-speaking in tongues, praying,</p>

	<p><i>She always prayed for him and my mum always said from a young age that I was going to be a Minister I was going to be a Minister and she took me to her Church which wasn't COGIC at the time and I used to go there with her as well and go to Sunday School but I remember vividly growing up in the church and especiallyRoad at the time and having to-coming off the bus and having to help clear up the hall you know and picking up the drink bottles whiskey bottles and the beer cans and tidying up the church and helping out before we started Sunday School in the morning.</i></p>	<p>prophetic</p> <p>clearing up church</p>
<p>Was this decision made after thinking about it over a period of time or was it a Damascus Road experience?</p>	<p><i>It was thinking about it over a period of time it was when my mum died and it brought it home to me; there were 3 of us and I was the oldest one at home and my Dad used to do night work and I remember at night and my mum died at home and I remember I think it was quite a traumatic experience for me because at night I was a little bit fearful at night because she died at home and I always used to pray and say to the Lord well you know Lord you know you took my mum away and Lord I would like to become a Christian one day. Yes yea it started from there really it started from there and it wasn't until I was 18 that I actually gave my heart to the Lord.</i></p>	<p>Over a period of time – since death of mother</p> <p>traumatic, fearful, pray</p> <p>late teens</p>
<p>What caused you to become a Christian? Do you think that there were any particular influences?</p>	<p><i>I think just growing up cause even though I was in the Church I think just growing up even as a late teenager I was experiencing bits of the world you know but still had my feet in the Church and still had to decide to go to Church no one forced me it was just within me and um you know I came to the decision later on and you know well I think it was about time it was a bit of a shock to my friends because I was always the party pooper and when I told them I wasn't going to do</i></p>	<p>Growing up</p> <p>In the world and in church- dissonance? attending church voluntarily</p> <p>right time shock to friends</p>

<p>Did you have any specific classes/teaching e.g. New Believers' Classes/Baptism classes</p>	<p><i>this anymore and become a Christian it was a big thing you know it was the talk of the Town Hall J... won't last 6 months, you won't last 3 months because they knew who I was</i></p> <p><i>No I can't say I did cause when I when I got baptised I remember when I got saved it was quite a number of young people who got saved at round about the same time and they all came for Baptism and they all came for pre baptism classes but I didn't go</i></p> <p>How come <i>I don't know maybe there was indecision in my mind; maybe there was questioning in my mind at that time and they were saying come on J get Baptised together I didn't it was 2 years after actually I got baptised and I didn't tell anybody, my mum and dad had got saved at that time and my step mum and my dad got remarried and baptised and I didn't even tell them.</i></p> <p>So you knew there was a baptism <i>I knew there was a baptism happening in Brockley and I knew my mum and dad were going to be baptised but I hadn't told anybody I attended no classes I just thought well yes I am going to do this at this time yes and I just literally you know followed them on the day and said you know I am getting baptised and they said 'what you're getting baptised' and I said yea you know and I remember telling Elder...s at the time that I was going to do it that night</i></p> <p>So did you have any classes afterwards – did they say so this is what you have done <i>No to be honest with you I didn't I was involved um I got involved in the Sunday School and I was going to Sunday School at that time I had a good teacher who was always encouraging me and that was Evangelist at the time and she was head of the Sunday school at at the time, we had moved toby then and she was encouraging me and she was on the verge I think to move and she always encouraged me</i></p>	<p>No classes a number of young people in church</p> <p>indecision questioning baptised 2 years after secret</p> <p>baptised at same time as parents</p> <p>involved in Sunday School, encouraged by teacher to teach class, teaching through practical ministry, exhorting or leading testimony</p>
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	<p><i>to come and take the class and teach the class and I think that helped me and then obviously the Youth Services were attended at the time Mother was in charge of the Youth and young people then and I was always encouraged to give an exhortation or to lead a testimony or to lead a service initially yea so um yes that was my teaching</i></p> <p>Ok - so really you are saying that New Believers classes or Baptism classes were on offer but you didn't take it up</p> <p><i>No I didn't take it</i></p>	service
<p>When were you baptised? How long was that after you became a Christian?</p>	<p><i>2 years</i></p>	<p>long gap between saved and baptised</p>
<p>When were you received into membership and did you have any preparation classes for membership?</p>	<p><i>No again um I didn't it was a few months before laugh ha ha ha A few months after before obviously they had Bible studies that I tried to attend and you know and then the Youth meeting was always my sort of thing and my encouragement and my teaching and going to the youth group and young people's meeting.</i></p>	<p>attended bible studies, youth meetings and teaching in Sunday School –Did not attend preparation classes for membership</p>
<p>As a child, did you have any sense of belonging to the church or being a member before being given the right hand of fellowship?</p>	<p><i>Yes I felt I belonged in the church I was always welcomed you know as a young boy it was always – I remember the late Superintendent ... in.... we used to go round the back and playing table tennis and round the back they used to come looking for us and we used to disappear and that was always a bit of fun, bit of mischievousness and I remember always running and hiding you know church was always a place that I felt safe. Yes.</i></p>	<p>belonged, welcomed</p> <p>fun with adults, feeling safe</p>
<p>What difference did it make in receiving the right hand of fellowship?</p>	<p><i>Just that it was belonging I had a voice more of a voice being a member whereas not being a member you know perhaps you know I couldn't have that voice although I didn't feel anyway isolated at all I think I was still looked upon as a member you know,</i></p>	<p>belonging, had a voice although didn't feel isolated looked on as a member</p>

	<p><i>cause when I got baptised people couldn't believe I wasn't baptised, couldn't believe they used to say but you got saved and I said you know but they couldn't believe that I hadn't been baptised . People thought I was already baptised and I was already a member of the Church, but I wasn't at the time</i></p>	
<p>Question 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does growing in faith mean to you? 	<p><i>Um growing in faith I think for me um um over the years is just having a better um understanding of the Lord having a closer walk with the Lord and I think for me it is also about um um I have always sort grown and excel within the Church's environment you know um from attending youth meetings; being a group leader, assisting, then teaching in Sunday school and then taking over Sunday school you know, so for me you know that was a journey over those years you know and I think having experienced outside of COGIC as well; because I did prison ministry which was one of the things I wanted to do, which also cemented my faith and helped me to realise um you know how blessed I was – going and seeing young people and young men in prison that also helped build me you know and I have just been able to share my faith with other people.</i></p> <p>So growing in faith for you is moving up within the church</p>	<p>Better understanding of the Lord, closer walk, excelling in church, journey through the auxiliaries</p> <p>Experience outside COGIC, prison ministry Sharing faith</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on 2 Peter 3:18, what do you think are the signs of growth? 	<p><i>Well its having a better understanding of the Lord and therefore and that understanding develops and moving within the various auxiliaries of the Church you know um you know to understand how those areas operate or you know how they function; how they have an impact also not only in my life but in other people's lives as well</i></p> <p><i>Remind me growing in grace – um in the early days the signs of growth the people used to measure the signs of growth even by your testimony yea</i></p>	<p>Better understanding of the Lord, moving within auxiliaries , understanding how areas operate</p> <p>Early days- testimonies, how pray, exhorted.</p>

	<p><i>how you testified how you prayed you know how you exhorted in the Lord those were the signs outward signs to other people in the Church and also for an individual for me it was a sign of how I was growing I was able to pray better I was able to you know when I give my testimony I wasn't so much afraid to stand up and to testify how I exhorted and so far when it came to Youth Convention, even be the speaker at the convention and to me that was a mark as to how far I had grown in faith to be able to speak and to be asked to speak and thank God I haven't done too bad a job you know laugh (ha ha ha)yes</i></p>	<p>Outward signs for people and participant Not afraid-confidence? Speak at conventions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is growth measured? How do you know that you are growing in faith? 	<p><i>I think also I think it as opposed to understanding a better understanding of the word for me and some people would say they would agree with me um my problem has always been retention of the word in terms of the you know and I think that maybe that's just a skill that people develop with the Holy Spirit as well um um guiding a person that can develop but that was always been my burden bearer, probably the wrong word, but I think now over the years you become more familiar because you become more familiar you're able to recite some of the scriptures sometimes that helps you or gives you the impression or sign that you are growing</i></p>	<p>Understanding of the word</p> <p>Holy Spirit guiding a person Recite scriptures as had a problem with retention</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holiness and sanctification are stressed in COGIC. What does each mean? How are they connected to growing in faith? (To be asked if not mentioned by participants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holiness what does it mean <i>Holiness um although it is quite close. Holiness in COGIC is is um always about your lifestyle, about how you live, how you dress you know, ha ha, I think over the years there has been a lot of emphasis on that – your dress is how you portray how you are holy but I take another view on that that it's all about how you live your life from day to day because you know you can wear the nice white dress on a Sunday morning but be the devil on the following day the Monday. So it's all about its about your lifestyle you know and how you live before the Lord the Lord tells</i> 	<p>Old view-lifestyle, how live, dress,</p> <p>Personal view-live life from day to day Contrast between Sunday and Monday living Walk uprightly, life that reflects love of Christ</p>

	<p><i>us that we are to live holy and we are to walk uprightly and therefore our life should reflect as at Sunday school pledge says our life should reflect the love of Christ the mirror should reflect our love of Christ in us. And we also need to dress moderately and we also need to behave appropriately when we are not only in other peoples presence but remember the all seeing eye watching you it's a daily it's a daily walk you know. Daily walk. A commitment you know to the Lord sanctification commitment to the Lord committing to the Lord only a daily basis so that he can use us because we don't know when we will be asked or called upon at any time just because I am a minister it doesn't mean that if I was a brother I can't be called upon to pray for them - to pray for someone and God will use us so long as we are sanctified for his use set apart for his use.</i></p>	<p>Moderate dress, appropriate behaviour not only in people's presence, all seeing eye watching-daily walk Sanctification –commitment to the Lord, daily basis so can be used – pray for someone set apart for God's use</p>
	<p><i>What's the connection between that and growing in faith</i> <i>Well I think once you've decided in your heart you are going to live holy and you are going to live a sanctified life um walking with the Lord then I believe that the Lord himself will also teach you, the Lord himself will also be able to send you a word and you will also be able to a certain extent be reading a word God is able to give you its amazing when you read a word sometimes God is able to highlight areas that you can even be able to encourage someone with that word so I believe its not so much oneself but once you have committed yourself once you have sanctified life also I believe that you are praying all the things that you going to do praying, reading God's word we should therefore see signs; we should see signs.</i></p>	<p>Decide in heart to live sanctified life, Lord teaches, sends a word, reading a word and God highlights areas, encourage someone</p> <p>Commitment Praying, reading, seeing signs</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your faith stronger than it was 10 years ago? In what ways? 	<p><i>Um I would say yes cause I think that the time that we are living in we're facing more severe challenges and I believe yes my faith is stronger and I believe that much is required I believe that as you develop in the Lord then you develop the challenges become even greater ha ha you know it's a test of one's faith you know because I believe as a minister that some of the issues that us as ministers are facing now, that some of our previous ministers have never faced them you know and I think the challenges are even become even greater I believe that when most of our fore parents when they came to this country there was that family unit there was that togetherness there was people coming that have the same mind. But now what you have got that sort of um separation in church so you people coming in who don't have that faith background um so therefore the job becomes even greater because you are having to also teach them you know more than if they came from that background.</i></p>	<p>Severe challenges</p> <p>Much required – develop in Lord greater challenges Minister facing more challenges than fore parents</p> <p>In the past, family unit, same mind,</p> <p>Separation- as different people coming in without faith background</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel more committed to God – to church? How is that commitment demonstrated: 	<p><i>Um Yes um I think there's always I think deficiencies even for me deficiencies I believe that I still need to um aspire to or reach but I think my commitment and desire is still there and even greater now you know because you know if you're not reading the signs and you are not seeing what's happening around the world you're not seeing that it's the last days it's the last days so therefore it becomes even more critical and important that the message of the Gospel is spread, for people to realise that time is short, so many people that I know are dying my age younger than me children babies senior people so its its right across the board.</i></p> <p>Your more committed to God –</p>	<p>Deficiencies , need to aspire and reach commitment still there, need to read the signs of times – last days</p> <p>Need to spread the gospel</p> <p>Tradition getting in the</p>

	<p>are you more committed to Church</p> <p><i>Yes I am more committed to church I think there are things in the church that we face in terms of traditions that sometimes get in the way, this is a tradition this is a – we know but really trying to move away from that and focus on the Word and what does the word say at the time, you know, it was the Word was written and our understanding you know what was going on we tend, especially those from the West Indian we bring a lot of our culture with us you know and that sometimes you know sometimes get mixed up with doctrine. Yea</i></p> <p>So you are more committed to church</p>	<p>way</p> <p>West Indian culture gets mixed up with doctrine</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How often do you attend church? Sundays/midweek and which midweek services/conventions etc 	<p><i>Oh God</i></p> <p>Sundays mid week</p> <p><i>Well um I suppose when I was at prior to going to and becoming a Pastor there I was there every Sunday morning, Sunday evening some Friday nights and some Wednesdays nights – when I went to Birmingham as a Pastor um because I was Pastor of a distance I was there all Sunday and sometimes on Saturday as well, depending on what was going on – I used to attend some of the prayer meetings as well not all – being back at probably I can probably say that I'm there every day I am there for prayer meeting, like tonight, Wednesday night Bible studies/men's fellowship, Friday night is probably a night when I take a rest and step back but I have to bring my daughter down yea</i></p> <p>Ok</p> <p><i>And then we if we have a Saturday service convention I will be there as well</i></p>	<p>Sunday morning, evening, Fridays, Wednesday</p> <p>Everyday</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the 	<p><i>Well its um its important its one of</i></p>	<p>Sacraments on</p>

<p>important of the Lord's Supper to you? How does it support you in your growth in faith</p>	<p><i>the sacraments that we do every month as often as you do it we do it once a month and for me it's very significant that we can remember what the Lord Jesus Christ went through even that last support with his disciples and even through all of that he knew that he was to be betrayed he still supped and dined with his disciples knowing that. And as often as you do it you remember of me every Christian it should be very much a highlight of our week or that particular time. We do it once a month, some churches do it every week you know - I think every Christian should make every effort to come to that service even if they don't make any other service you know that's the service that they should come to.</i></p> <p>Does it support you in your growth and faith</p> <p><i>Um I think that its important does it support my growth and faith it's a reflection its something to reflect upon, Jesus suffering and it's a constant reminder to me that you know that what Jesus went through so I think from that point of view more a constant reminder</i></p>	<p>monthly basis</p> <p>Remembering</p> <p>Highlight of week</p> <p>Every Christian should come to that service</p> <p>Constant reminder</p>
<p>Question 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What agencies of the church supported your growth and how: i.e. Sunday school, Youth meetings, Children's church, Bible Study, Prayer meeting, Worship Service, preaching, exhortation, testimony, others – you might have mentioned some already 	<p><i>Agencies auxiliaries Youth Meeting I did attend Bible College and then other Prison ministry Young Offenders about 15 years that I will always say was a big chunk of development for me you know um</i></p> <p>Anything else like some things peoples don't think about</p> <p><i>Well I suppose I mean over the years even as a teenager from time to time get asked to give an exhortation it was a constant for me to give exhortation in conventions, national youth conventions um I didn't used to Moderate on occasions but I have done it on one or two occasions um but really testimony service being an usher at conventions and local church, van driver, driving the van for many years taking the saints to various churches.</i></p>	<p>Youth meetings , Bible College, Prison Ministry</p> <p>National youth conventions, usher</p> <p>Bishop Bell encourage</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there any people that helped you grow in faith? 	<p><i>I think I suppose the biggest influence on my life as a Christian was Bishop Bell, yea cause he used to always encourage me he used to beat me down ha ha ha and he used to beat me down</i></p> <p>What do you mean</p> <p><i>I think Bishop Bell expected me to be there all the time, I was a keen sports person, I played a lot of football and I remember one Sunday Bishop said to me 'Brother ...all this playing football on a Sunday is not good. You know you're possibly a future minister of this church, you have to be here' and he expected me there. And I remember one convention and we used to have conventions for 8 /9 days and one day I took out to go to a friend's birthday celebration and Bishop must have found out about it and Bishop had me, Superintendent Blake, Superintendent Anderson, Superintendent Payne outside the Church; 'do you know where Brother ... was ? Brother ...was at a birthday party a convention is going on and he's at a birthday party' I always remember that 4 of the men circled me. But he was I used to help his main drivers and on more than a few occasions I used to help take Bishop round about Bishop was always the person that inspired me for he is just he's always on the go, he couldn't drive but nowhere was too far for him to go and to visit people, I remember having to take him to Birmingham one day to visit a family who wasn't well I drove to Birmingham he wanted to see Evangelist That said a lot about him to me. You know</i></p>	<p>Prophetic? Expectations of future minister</p> <p>Circled by 4 senior men</p> <p>Inspired by Bishop driving to Birmingham to see a friend who was not well</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role did your family play in the growth of your faith? E.g. 	<p><i>Apart from my mum apart from my natural mum who died when I was 11, she died at the age of 40 um but apart from that really it was</i></p>	<p>Sunday School Church family</p>

<p>Family devotions, values etc</p>	<p><i>being associated with Sunday school and the E.... family at the time Sister S., Sister B... and J...were sort of those around me the church family that was encouraging me as a young age</i> So it was more the church family rather than your family <i>Yes because my Dad wasn't saved at that time</i></p>	
<p>Question 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you experienced any personal challenges to your faith; e.g. how do you overcome sin, have you had experience of having to cope with long term illnesses? Were there any times that you felt unsupported or experienced a 	<p><i>Um personal challenges I think I think just a struggle with humanity you know really and being a man and the Bible says that we are flesh you know desires you know flesh will always be there the devil know s that to create a lovely picture you know I think that has always been my struggle I was always a party man in the past having you know female connection you know I think the struggle has been within me as a person and that side I have never been a person who takes drugs – I tried it – drink you know – I tried it – but you know I can't say I wasn't a thief I wasn't</i> So how have you overcome sin or the flesh <i>It's really a daily walk with the Lord. It's trying to really ask God pray to God ask God to for guidance protection trying to stay close to the Lord cause you give the devil an inch you know and he'll come in. It's trying to avoid in my younger age trying to stay with the Lord and not trying to the idle I have never been lazy I have always worked in the Church and I think this has kept my mind focused on the Lord you know and not to wander you know. I think you just need to keep busy at times.</i> Have you had any experience of having to cope with long term illnesses? <i>Um No no no</i></p> <p><i>Um I think we I think we could do a lot better in terms of supporting especially young men in the</i></p>	<p>Struggle being a man-devil creates a lovely picture, party man, female connections</p> <p>Daily walk, pray, stay close to God</p> <p>Stay busy, working in church focuses the mind</p> <p>General lack of support for young men in</p>

<p>lack of understanding by individuals or the church as a whole?</p>	<p><i>church I think there is no sort of structure that can encourage and you say to young men you are perhaps the men of tomorrow or today we need to try and encourage you to help them train them to accept responsibility within the Church, I think we need to do that better, we've had as a Church we have had a number of young men that have passed through our hands and gone on and I am just saying well what could we have done to keep them. Not going elsewhere you know but the good thing for COGIC is that we have always been good at what we do that most of them that have gone on and left COGIC have become very influential in other Churches (laugh) ha ha ha They have got great responsibility and leadership roles and I am just saying to myself well I that's a shame why couldn't they be still here.</i></p> <p>You asked a question? About leadership</p> <p><i>That's right yes exactly we didn't give them leadership responsibility we didn't give them identify them or appreciate them you know and therefore you know they left And I feel sometimes over the years I think they may have been where some of our senior men felt threatened in a way you know and certainly for me and certainly for a lot of the young men in my age group now who have been in the church desire has never been to take over or wanted to take over we just wanted to help and support and make things better but sometimes people don't see that people think that you are trying to take over from them. So I think we could do that a lot better</i></p>	<p>church in terms of leadership training</p> <p>Young men have left and have responsibility in other churches</p> <p>Misunderstanding by senior men who felt threatened by older ones</p>
<p>Question 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What strategies do you use to 	<p><i>Ah um if I'm honest my message yesterday was about one hour and</i></p>	<p>recognise need to spend</p>

<p>support your own growth? Do you have a daily devotion and how would you describe it? Prayer, meditation, Bible reading</p>	<p><i>um and that message came to me and also for me to share with others</i></p> <p>Right</p> <p><i>About the need for us to spend more time with the Lord whether it is an hour in one slot or whether it's an hour broken up in different slots. I think I could do more, I don't think I am doing enough I think I could do a lot more, I'm not saying that I don't pick up a bag or I don't read a book I am reading Bishop Porter's book at the moment</i></p> <p>So you haven't got a systematic way of doing it?</p> <p>No</p>	<p>more time with the Lord, reading</p> <p>No systematic way</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you use other literature besides the Bible and if so what sort? Daily readings, books/ pamphlets 	<p><i>Well I have the Sunday school book, the yearly national Sunday school I will read that there is a good friend of mine in St Louis who sends me a Sunday school review every week you know and I read his review and that helps you know as well as I said the amount of books and other peoples books I have got and I have read sort of part way through but never finished, I read different chapters.</i></p>	<p>Sunday School Book, Sunday School Review, other books</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you follow or have you undertaken any specific courses to help you in your growth as a Christian? 	<p><i>No I have been on a Foundation Counselling Course and obviously we attend our Ministers retreats and training weeks and then I used to attend which he doesn't have it now, Pastor A.... used to have ministers together I used to attend on a regular basis once or twice a month I used to attend that and meet with other ministers and pastors there. That was very good</i></p>	<p>Counselling Course, Minister's Retreat. Pastor A ministers together</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you visit other churches or attend special meetings with the aim of helping you to grow in your faith? 	<p><i>Yes I mean I do I think less so now that it used to be We used to always visit other churches When I was in.... they made it a point that we visited other denominations We had a good family of churches that we visited and they visited us</i></p>	<p>Visiting other denominations</p>

	<p><i>on a regular basis</i></p> <p>Did that help you grow in your faith Like Pastor Matthew was definitely about meeting other ministers – But the one in Birmingham was</p> <p><i>We used to have the churches together and group I think CBL I used to attend that – that was good regular speakers there and ministers coming together lunch or breakfast.</i></p>	
<p>Question 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How familiar are you with the Statement of Faith? Can you say it without looking at it or can you summarise it? <p>Can you name the main doctrines of COGIC?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How important are the Statement of Faith and Doctrines of the COGIC in your everyday life and to your growth in faith? 	<p><i>Well if you ask me to repeat it I would struggle</i></p> <p><i>We do have Statements of Faith on either side of the wall so people can look at on the Church although we started out repeating it during service but we stopped maybe we need to go back and just</i></p> <p><i>Um um it tells of the Holy Spirit, and Angels, Demons, we believe</i></p> <p><i>I think well as a denomination as a body but whether it has an influence in my daily life do I refer to it on a daily basis I suppose indirectly but not directly. Again it's about your walk with God your relationship with God um it's a personal thing and it's about how you are in the sight of God um yes there are other things you know like the devil, angels, its more about you the individual, does it influence me perhaps not as much no but as a body and going to a church and obviously speaking to people and people asking me what does your church believe in then you know then that's a sort of thing that I would bring out to let them know what the church believes in you know Son Holy Spirit we believe in Heaven and Hell Those sort of things I would quite happily explain to someone but at the end of the day you know to me it's a relationship your relationship with God is most important</i></p>	<p>Struggle</p> <p>Named 3</p> <p>Indirectly influences daily life</p> <p>About your walk with God</p> <p>To inform people what the church believes</p> <p>Relationship with God more important</p>
<p>Question 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What responsibilities 	<p><i>Well at the moment its Pastor in the church and also extended from that</i></p>	<p>Has had a number of</p>

<p>do you have in Church? i.e. Sunday school teacher, youth leader, van driver etc.</p>	<p><i>looking after a district of churches, Sunday school teacher, Assistant Youth Leader and Group leader, Van Driver, Sunday School Superintendent, Usher , sang in the choir for many years</i></p>	<p>roles</p>
<p>Question 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think the church has equipped you to engage with wider issues in society? E.g. everyday issues relating to black Christians/people in society such as racism at school/work, politics etc. As a church with mainly black constituency, has COGIC highlighted topics such as the Black presence in the Bible, Black contribution to Christianity etc? Do you think such topics would have supported your growth in faith? Do you think that the church should be more involved in community projects alongside its religious functions? 	<p><i>I think very a little I wouldn't say greatly I think I think most of what I have learnt is through working working life experiences as well going out and meeting other people pastors going to other churches rather than I think my own church I think its experience and knowledge built up under my own steam</i></p> <p>Not the church having done it</p> <p><i>No I think we could do a lot better in there in just in order to celebrate our Blackness our culture we could do a lot more a lot better.</i></p> <p><i>Um In bits and pieces really in general it's never really done that I think more recently and occasionally I remember in conventions it was mentioned mainly in teaching sessions and I think with the advent of Black History Month that helped to highlight the black presence in the Bible more than in the past</i></p> <p><i>Very much so cause I think the church will be left behind if we don't have some involvement in community activities, I think to be fair they have been involved in community activities for many years they have done Saturday schools nurseries that's community activities you know they have had some influence where people outside the church have come in and been involved in those areas</i></p>	<p>Church has not equipped but experience and knowledge from other places</p> <p>Church could do a lot more</p> <p>Occasionally – in conventions, in teaching sessions, Black History month-highlighting Black presence in the Bible</p> <p>Involved in Saturday Schools, nurseries</p>

	<p>anyway you know so I think some churches have been involved, more involved and that goes does sometimes to issues that COGIC faces where Pastors are not full time and therefore it may be a case of just doing as much as you can you know but if they were full time a lot of them would have more involved in community activities or be channelling more resources in community activities locally.</p>	<p>If Pastors were full time, they would be more involved</p>
<p>Question 10</p> <p>What do you think the church can do to support spiritual growth and development?</p>	<p><i>I think we have started to do that I think churches individual churches have their bible studies, individual churches have their Sunday school and going on individual churches have their prayer meetings and fasting individual churches may have some training traditions going on and I think at a district level and a national level especially with the Ministers' Retreat we have got we The Bible College the Pastors are encouraging their members to go to I think all of that helps spiritual growth within the local church and wider obviously there is always more that can be done but you know In the confines of time and resources we only can do the best we can, but I think steps are being taken now for people if they have a desire to know more about the Lord there are opportunity. The church may need to sponsor or support individuals or help them or have a desire or are committed and as a result can help them support the church further in the work and the church may sponsor or pay half or pay all of your studies in this particular area. Two guys who wanted to play the keyboard but one had musical experience but one didn't and one wanted to learn to play the keyboard and I paid for 10 lessons each for both of them to go and to learn um um the keyboard one of the guys wants to continue to do</i></p>	<p>Individual churches: Bible studies, Sunday Schools, prayer meetings and fasting</p> <p>District and national: Bible College and Ministers' Retreat</p> <p>Sponsor or support individuals with studies who can in turn support the church further</p>

	<i>the work and that makes me think where the churches can help individuals.</i>	
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Appendix 5

Thematic Analysis of Question 1 by all participants

Participant	Question 2	Response	Code
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At what age did you start attending, activities (Sunday school, church etc)? What are your earliest memories of church? 	<p>OK was that Sunday School <i>Sunday School yes</i> And main church <i>Mainly used to be Sunday School until probably until I was about 11/12 then I started to attend main service</i></p> <p>ok so what are your earliest memories of church</p> <p><i>Going to Sunday School I do remember at a young age going to Sunday School and being picked up in the Sunday School van by a guy called V and he used to pick me up every Sunday and my teacher was Sister S and Sister J and Sister B you know they used to be my teachers as well as Bro B; he used to be my teacher and I do remember the late Bishop Bell growing up, Superintendent Edwards, I did know of but I can't remember him Bishop McLachlan and you know but I do know of him there is a lot at Sunday School used to talk about him a lot Elder S...was also at the Church</i></p> <p>But Bishop McLachlan wasn't</p>	<p>Experience of Sunday School Main church much later</p> <p>Being picked up- van driver- teachers,</p> <p>Remembering pioneers of the church</p>

		<p>around then <i>No no he wasn't</i> Just to confirm Bishop McLachlan was the first Bishop in England</p>	
2		<p><i>Ah earlier memories probably got to be being together and with young people and the different activities that we used to do then</i></p>	Together with young people and activities
3		<p><i>Um as far as I remember I started from when I was little so around toddler age</i> I take it you are one of these people who were born within the Church Your parents are both active members of the Church <i>Yea</i> What are your earliest memories of Church <i>Um singing in the Choir, going to youth conventions and doing having my lunch and then going into doing um sessions with the Youth Leaders</i> Ok so it's mainly the youth sessions you remember</p>	<p>Toddler age</p> <p>Singing in choir, youth conventions, sessions with youth leaders</p>
4		<p><i>I have always attended activities I can't put an age on it because um my grandma used to conduct the choir and they made me a little choir and robe when I was about 4/5 to sit in the choir and attend practices I have always been involved since I can remember</i></p>	Always attended activities- choir robe at 4/5 to attend practice

		<p><i>I can't put an age on it</i></p> <p>You are one of these people that would say that you were born in the Church of God in Christ ok - so what are your earliest memories of church</p> <p><i>I don't know it's probably that one singing in the choir and also taking part in the Sunday School Christmas Programme and I had to sing Away in a Manger and I sang it and I had practiced at home and I couldn't understand why all these people were crying and that's what I remember me singing and people absolutely bawling in tears,</i></p> <p>Really</p> <p><i>Yea and it was quite a it was quite distressing cause I thought why are all these people crying did I do it right I just did it the way I was told to – that's the earliest memory of things I can remember and it's because people were crying it will always stick in my mind</i></p> <p>And later did you think about why the people were crying</p> <p><i>It's because I was so small and then you know I sang all the words all right</i></p> <p>Wow</p>	<p>Singing</p> <p>People crying</p> <p>People crying because she was good for age</p>
5		<p><i>About 11 12 a bit younger</i></p> <p><i>I actually started at</i></p>	Started elsewhere

		<i>the New Testament and then we moved to W.. and it was Methodist and I would say 1963/4 COGIC</i>	
6		<p><i>I think I was probably like 3 years and upwards I have been in the church all of my life</i></p> <p>So you are one of these COGIC babies</p> <p><i>Yea</i></p> <p>What are your earliest memories of church?</p> <p><i>My earliest memories of church is when I was probably under 5 and going into the back room um getting ready to sing with the church's choir because my dad was the children's choir director</i></p> <p>Going in the back room was that National</p> <p><i>No going in the backroom was my local church</i></p> <p><i>That is my earliest memory</i></p> <p>So your earliest memory is about singing</p> <p><i>Yea</i></p> <p>And you still sing</p> <p><i>Yes I do</i></p>	<p>Singing</p> <p>choir</p>
7		<i>Well I was born into the Church of God in Christ – so all my life I have been going to Church going into Sunday school from the earliest memory of going into Sunday school I would say um maybe about 7 - 8 years old when I actually started going</i>	Sunday School

		<p><i>regularly to Sunday school.</i></p> <p>So what are your earliest memories of church?</p> <p><i>Church long um sometimes quickly boring um sometimes um not really um understanding what was going on at times um but yeah but the most I remember it as being long sometimes boring and not necessarily wanting to be there</i></p> <p>Oh that's interesting because all these years after you are still here</p>	<p>Church long and boring – not wanting to be there</p>
8		<p><i>Ever since I can remember must have been probably about I have been in church all my life so my earliest recollection is probably about when I was 5</i></p> <p>So you were one of these people who I would describe as a COGIC baby you were born in the Church</p> <p><i>That's correct</i></p> <p>What sort of things do you remember then</p> <p><i>Going to a place called ... just a church in Brixton I remember vividly it had um paraffin heaters down at the front it was a small church, anybody who was anybody was there a couple of musicians there playing guitars and I remember them playing guitars and people being a bit loud shouting and</i></p>	<p>Church –important people there</p> <p>Musicians, guitars, loud, shouting singing</p>

		<i>singing and that's all I remember</i>	
9		<p><i>Aged 11 Um earliest memories wow um that was even before aged 11 um I think going to church before going to COGIC and that was C (name of church) and that was probably at the ages of 8 and 9 and um but that's was in the past and I do remember that</i></p> <p>What made your family switch to COGIC why did they switch to COGIC?</p> <p><i>Um we knew Pastor ... and my parents knew Pastor Payne from um S....(name of church) days and um</i></p> <p>So you didn't go to S...</p> <p><i>Yea I was a baby at S...</i></p> <p>So you were in the Church of God in Christ in S.....</p> <p><i>Now you mentioned it I was strangely enough I can't remember it Mum and Dad got married in S, and then they spent a little bit of time and then afterwards Dad started popping all over the place and in particular he moved over to C (name of church) then um we was there for a while and that's then after that they decided to go back to Pastor ... It's all because of location where dad worked</i></p>	Moved from church to church before settling at COGIC

10		<p><i>Earliest memories of church was Sunday school taking part in the various activities at Sunday school, going around in the Van</i></p> <p><i>Saturday outings, yea I get up and down I can't remember where the meetings were my dad was keen well he lived for it in those days so he would go to work and come in Saturday and we're off to church</i></p> <p><i>Go wherever the meetings was we would go</i></p> <p><i>Come back late at night and up again Sunday</i></p> <p>You seem to have enjoyed that</p> <p><i>Yea it sort of became a way of life important significant way of life and that's stayed with me</i></p>	<p>Sunday School, activities</p> <p>Meetings on Saturday evenings</p> <p>Way of life</p>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was there a specific time in your church experience that you decided to make the commitment to become a Christian? 	<p><i>Um I think really um always been involved in the church, and my mum, my natural mum, who died when I was 11 she was a Christian and she used to sit down with us and kneel down with us at the bed and used to pray with us and I always remember my mum speaking in tongues you know and calling everybody she was particularly concerned about my older brother and he was always the main topic of all her prayers because he was a little wild (laugh</i></p>	<p>Always involved</p> <p>Mother-died when No 1 was 11, Christian-speaking in tongues, praying</p>

		<p><i>ha ha ha) but She always prayed for him and my mum always said from a young age that I was going to be a Minister I was going to be a Minister and she took me to her Church which wasn't COGIC at the time and I used to go there with her as well and go to Sunday School but I remember vividly growing up in the church and especiallyRoad at the time and having to - coming off the bus and having to help clear up the hall you know and picking up the drink bottles whiskey bottles and the beer cans and tidying up the church and helping out before we started Sunday School in the morning.</i></p>	<p>Prophetic?</p> <p>Clearing up the church</p>
2		<p><i>I believe I was about I think I was about 16 to 18 it kind of became real to me I think it was My uncle in our church talking to us older lot and making us realise that we're older now and we have to start being serious about what we are doing</i></p>	<p>16-18 Real</p> <p>serious</p>
3		<p><i>When I was a part of going to Youth Groups</i> OK so there was a specific time <i>Yes</i></p>	<p>Youth groups</p>
4		<p><i>Yea – it was quite hard, everyone in my</i></p>	<p>Peers baptised</p>

		<p><i>age group got baptised and saved before I did um so I was kind a like the black sheep even though we had come up the same and even though in some cases I was doing a bit more than everyone else, cause I have always been quite active people couldn't understand why I didn't jump in the pool with everybody else, so there was a time about 15/ 16 where I did feel kind a pressured to go down the baptism route um with everybody else um but I didn't and I'm glad for that because something formed later on when I was about 17 entering my A levels and I thought ok this thing is not just working in church it's not just singing in church I'm actually I can relate to it and from that and from um that type of feeling that's when you know I started taking um the Believers Classes and then I went through and got baptised and became a fully fledged member</i></p>	<p>Black sheep for not getting baptised</p> <p>Already active</p> <p>Resisted pressure</p> <p>Something formed later</p> <p>Relating to what doing in church</p> <p>Believer's class Baptised membership</p>
5		<p>No</p> <p>So when you say No</p> <p><i>I have always said I didn't want to be like the others not so much the Christians I loved church and</i></p>	<p>Loved church but not wanting to be like people</p>

		<i>enjoyed going to church but I always used to say and they still talk about it now "I'm not going to be like those people" and I used to sit and laugh at them so it was God that made that decision for me not me</i>	
6		<i>Um yes there was um I think it was when I was 14 I listened to a um speaker that came to my church and his name was S... and at the time there was a lot of like um hip hop music going around and everything so he did a lecture on the power behind music and how um there are like really deep meanings behind certain celebrities videos and lyrics and stuff like that and it just spurred me to commit myself more to Christ like that I can be um a light in that darkness</i>	14 Talk about music scene Commitment after talk about music scene
7		<i>Yes around the age of about 13 um I decided or made the decision to commit my life to the Lord that was after attending a service or convention and um that's when I made the serious commitment to become a Christian I would say maybe a year or two prior to that I was maybe trying to be good but um the actual</i>	13 Commitment after a particular service Commitment

		<p><i>commitment the actual decision to become a Christian was about the age of 13</i></p> <p>And Church stopped being boring then or was it still boring</p> <p><i>It became more interesting and I think making the commitment and to the Lord and beginning to pray more my I guess my opinion at church began to change it err the way I looked at church the way things were done it changed and I think that affected the way I enjoyed church and yes there were still some boring services and so forth but I think because um I tried to I don't know have relationships with God outside of just going to church every Sunday that also made a difference to the way that I enjoyed church</i></p> <p>Alright so Church more or less continued as it was but you had changed?</p> <p><i>I kind a changed yeah</i></p>	<p>Commitment pray</p> <p>Relationship with God</p> <p>Regular church attendance</p>
8		<p><i>Yea when I was 17</i></p> <p>Oh so from</p> <p><i>Well the thing is you have been in church all your life and um I remember we went to Leicester to the New Testament Convention and um a friend of mine I remember a guy in</i></p>	<p>17</p> <p>In church all life</p>

		<p><i>my um secondary school came up and said I am now a Christian and I was like laughing at him And then that Saturday we went to Leicester and like I went up to the altar and I started to cry my eyes out and it was like this can't be me I am immune to church I have been in church all my life and the experience was like ok I reckon God's coming into my life wow and you know when they you get up from the altar and look around and things look new well that's the truth it looked like just everything looked different and that was my first true experience of um meeting God</i></p>	<p>Specific time after being immune to church</p> <p>First experience of meeting God and everything new</p>
9		<p><i>Yes um when I was I always wanted to be saved as a teen because there were so many things that were going on in my life that was not brilliant and for at least 3 or 4 years I wanted to but each time you go to the altar you just think you go in there e nothing's happening um It was as early as 11 that I knew I was going to be a Minister um I knew as early as that and I was questioned um inadvertently gave an answer that actually started me through</i></p>	<p>Always wanted to be saved –things going on in life</p> <p>Going to the altar but nothing happening – knew was going to be a minister by age of 11</p>

		<p><i>the rest of my life and that was actually when I started my secondary school and I had an interview with the deputy head master and he said 'what do you want to be' and I said ' a clergyman'</i></p> <p>Wow</p> <p><i>And he looked at me and my mother killed herself laughing but</i></p> <p>But how could you know I'm just intrigued</p> <p><i>Ah the answer was inadvertent to be honest with you Because it was I meant to say 'clerical' but it was a little bit flash but on saying that, that then sort of made a lot of difference and I could actually quite understand the reasons why um you know I focussed on that I needed to be not just a minister but more importantly a child of God so err at that age at the age of 14 you are thinking things aren't brilliant so you kept on thinking about being a Christian because that was as far as I was concerned my 'get out' in my life and to a day job when I was 16 in 1978 yea December 1978 I got saved.</i></p>	<p>Freudian slip or Pentecostal way of knowing?</p> <p>Focus on being a minister</p> <p>Being a Christian as a 'get out in life'</p> <p>Saved at 16</p>
10		<p><i>Um yes ok I have always been in church as far as I can remember especially under the care of my</i></p>	<p>Always in church</p>

		<p><i>grandmother the church was a must</i> So was that in Jamaica <i>Yes</i> <i>From when I was about 15 16 things started to get serious I started to looking for answers more solid answers than just hearing somebody say something and the turning point came I think one Wednesday mid – week service in our old church in Leyton Pastor ...? church ...Road so that was the significant turning point</i> You committed your life to Christ then So you said you started to go to COGIC at age 9 so was that when you came over from Jamaica <i>Yes I just came over</i> But you were going to church before in Jamaica <i>Yes</i></p>	<p>15 -16 Serious</p> <p>Looking for answers</p> <p>Specific turning point</p>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was this decision made after thinking about it over a period of time or was it a Damascus Road experience? 	<p><i>It was thinking about it over a period of time it was when my mum died and it brought it home to me; there were 3 of us and I was the oldest one at home and my Dad used to do night work and I remember at night and my mum died at home and I remember I think it was quite a traumatic</i></p>	<p>Over a period of time – since death of mother</p> <p>traumatic, fearful, pray</p>

		<p><i>experience for me because at night I was a little bit fearful at night because she died at home and I always used to pray and say to the Lord well you know Lord you know you took my mum away and Lord I would like to become a Christian one day. Yes yea it started from there really it started from there and it wasn't until I was 18 that I actually gave my heart to the Lord.</i></p>	late teens
2		<p><i>Yeah thinking about it over time – actually maybe that's a good question I don't know I think part of it was over time but then I think the experiences that most young people that I know experienced it was just kind a happened because we were yea</i></p> <p>So when you say it just kind of happened, was that in church?</p> <p><i>Yeah it was in Church like obviously we were dared in church yea it kind a became real to us in church rather than over time and real thinking about it</i></p>	<p>Over a period of time</p> <p>Not sure as it kind of happened</p> <p>Became real in church</p>
3		<p><i>No no</i></p> <p>Was it immediate or</p> <p><i>No not immediate – no it was for me to grow more</i></p> <p>So it was over a period of time</p>	Not immediate- to grow more

		Yea	
4		<p><i>Yes it's because you always hear – you're in church all the time and when the altar call is being given you get the mothers who say 'get to the altar' 'get to the altar' I went ok there was a time after a long period of thinking thinking ok it's not just get to the altar and I come to church to do stuff I actually need it there was a pulling of my heart and I decided to go through at about the age 16 17</i></p>	<p>Over a period of thinking</p> <p>Pulling of heart 16/17</p>
5		<p><i>It sure was I was in church playing a tambourine singing a song and the next thing you know I was gone and it was a shock to everyone shock to myself I didn't know what came over me it was an experience that I can't explain really just one minute I'm normal and the next minute out of the body type of thing</i></p> <p>You said you were 'gone', on the floor or just?</p> <p><i>No I started dancing round the church, just started dancing round the church</i></p> <p>Oh OK</p> <p><i>I love dancing but it was a different type of dancing I was actually dancing round the church and playing the tambourine and um it was a shock to me I couldn't control it and it was like um</i></p>	<p>Specific experience</p> <p>'I was gone'</p> <p>shock</p> <p>dancing</p>

		<p>someone else</p> <p>Ok</p> <p>Yeah completely completely gone</p>	
6		<p>Um I thought about it quite a lot and then I decided to commit myself</p>	<p>Thought about it a lot</p> <p>commit</p>
7		<p>Um I'd say its about thinking about it over a period of time rather than a Damascus Road experience um</p>	<p>Over a period</p>
8		<p>No there was no thinking time I just went to a convention. In my head I had no intention of Church. It was just Church and I was going to have some fun for the weekend but the fun turned and started to be really serious I was a different person</p>	<p>No thinking time</p> <p>serious</p>
9		<p>Yes</p> <p>or was it a Damascus Road experience?</p> <p>No it was over a period of time</p>	<p>Period of time</p>
10		<p>Err over a period of time because I always had a church life but didn't have the commitment yea so um it was something that was building up yea and that was the solidifying point</p> <p>Was there something special about the sermon or anything or you just decided</p> <p>No it was the sermon or the way the</p>	<p>Period of time</p> <p>Always had church life</p> <p>Something building up</p> <p>Preacher</p>

		<i>preacher finished the sermon and went into an altar call and he take us his altar call was like a journey to Calvary yea – and he'd take us and it came to a point that I was personally travelling to Calvary I was personally at the cross that experience turned things around So although I was in the church I felt that I wasn't there that I was somewhere else</i>	Personal Journey to Calvary- Power of imagination or experience/insight of the Holy Spirit
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What caused you to become a Christian? Do you think that there were any particular influences? 	<i>I think just growing up cause even though I was in the Church I think just growing up even as a late teenager I was experiencing bits of the world you know but still had my feet in the Church and still had to decide to go to Church no one forced me it was just within me and um you know I came to the decision later on and you know well I think it was about time it was a bit of a shock to my friends because I was always the party pooper and when I told them I wasn't going to do this anymore and become a Christian it was a big thing you know it was the talk of the Town Hall J... won't last 6 months, you won't last 3 months because they knew who I was</i>	<p>Growing up</p> <p>In the world and in church- dissonance? attending church voluntarily</p> <p>right time shock to friends</p>
2		<i>Yea my uncle being an influence I think at</i>	Uncle

		<p><i>that time it was also there's like within the Youth Committee that were around during Youth Convention I think that at one time they kind a helped the President himself and maybe a few others that helped us to realise help me to realise that this was the next step and so on</i></p> <p>So you would say your Uncle and people on the Youth Committee</p> <p><i>And music to be honest Yea</i></p>	<p>Youth Committee And few others</p> <p>Helped to realise that it was the next step</p> <p>Music</p>
3		<p><i>Seeing the roles of the Leaders in the Church and wanting to become like them when I am older –</i></p> <p>I was going to say where there any particular influences</p> <p><i>Yea there was my Dad as a Youth Leader um like the mothers in the Church</i></p>	<p>Leaders</p> <p>Dad as Youth Leader Mothers in church</p>
4		<p><i>It's quite difficult um because I was 17 um in the middle of my A levels and there was lots of things going on in my personal life and I thought um me being in church parents always being in church grandparents in church I come from a Church background and it was as if because I was in church and cause I was active I had an understanding of the</i></p>	<p>Things going on in personal life</p> <p>Family background in church</p> <p>Active Understanding of message of Christ</p>

		<p><i>message of Christ so then I always thought I could ride on my knowledge and who my parents were and what type of background I was coming on and thinking of Heaven and Hell and all those sorts of things and eventually when I got saved it was about where will you spend eternity where will you end up and I thought I could get to heaven just based on what I knew and my parents and my background and when those type of things started to be shaky and when people or situations I was relying on to get me to the ultimate place it kind a seemed like they were wavering or they weren't too um sure so ok then who do I rest on this thing this place is real to me I have the knowledge that it is real to me but the people I think are going to get me in might not get me in and I said and it wasn't even in a Convention I was in bed um cause normally young people in our church it's conventions but Sunday night of convention Monday night of convention crying but it was when I was at home and ok I thought all these things are happening Lord if you</i></p>	<p>Thoughts about background and Heaven and Hell</p> <p>Where will I spend eternity</p> <p>Recognition that people and things could be shaky/wavering</p> <p>Real</p> <p>Not usual emotions of conventions</p>
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		<p><i>are there really not just for me to wear Black and White and Red and White and um show me and I'll follow you properly um but if you're really there and you really exist then if there is a place and it exists I can only get to this place with you and me not me you and everyone else so that's what made me tribulations in my life and thinking well the people I'm depending on or the situation I'm depending on is no longer stable so I have to pursue it for myself so that's what made me.</i></p> <p>Just want to pick up on one thing you said about just not wearing Black and White</p> <p><i>We're very strict very religious and strange and I have always been religious I've always been religious I have always known that 1st Sunday is Black and White, 2nd Sunday is Red and White, for women to wear you have to wear the hats I have always been very religious so that's what I meant I depended on that to get me through.</i></p> <p>Ok Thanks</p>	<p>Alone with God</p> <p>Tribulations in life</p> <p>Religious</p> <p>Church traditions</p>
5		<p><i>Oh yea definitely the experience I had Um influences were probably my parents because at the time they used to come and drag us to church; but because I</i></p>	<p>Specific experience</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Loved going to</p>

		<i>loved going it didn't bother me so much. So my parents were the influence</i>	Church
6		<p><i>It was more so I think that lecture just opened my eyes</i></p> <p>Right</p> <p><i>And then I realised that I didn't want to go to Hell I don't want to you know spend any day without, you know, having my Christian life shown through my whole life style so basically I just wanted to accept Christ and follow it as a lifestyle.</i></p> <p>Apart from S... do you think there were any particular influences</p> <p><i>I would say my grandma um cause she was an evangelist in the church she quite old now so she's not anymore well she's still an evangelist but she's not active Um she taught me a lot and also my dad and mum they instilled in us a lot things we learnt the 66 books of the bible like under 10 years old, so we were like it was little things but we would never forget it which has helped us now that we are at this age.</i></p>	<p>Specific lecture</p> <p>Not wanting to go to hell</p> <p>Wanted Christian life to show through whole lifestyle</p> <p>Grandma</p> <p>Parents</p>
7		<i>Um well I saw my parents life style but they didn't exert any pressure on me to become a Christian but I saw how they were living um ok</i>	<p>Parents lifestyle</p> <p>Raised in church Sermons</p> <p>Consequences of not becoming a</p>

		<p><i>there was- I had been raised in church I had heard all the sermons committing your life to Jesus and the consequences the final consequences anyway of not becoming a Christian and I think as well there was a bit of me um yes I acknowledged that there was God and I feared God and I also, if I am honest, I feared what would happen after I died as well. What the consequences of that was and I think that was that played a good part in it as well it wasn't yes I knew being a Christian would be a good life but also not being a Christian as well that played a part</i></p> <p>You talk about the consequences of not being a Christian, do you want to elaborate on that</p> <p><i>Yea a major one going to hell, and also I think facing life without not a crutch I wouldn't say but facing life um and I would say facing it alone no one to turn to yes I had my parents and friends but there are some circumstances where they can't help and just to know yea there is somebody else you can turn to</i></p> <p>Do you think there were any particular influences, you may have covered this</p>	<p>Christian</p> <p>Fear of God Consequences</p> <p>Fear of what would happen after death</p> <p>Good life of being a Christian</p> <p>Facing life without a crutch, facing life alone</p> <p>Need someone else to turn to</p>
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		<p>but you can elaborate <i>On becoming a Christian</i> Yea <i>I would say yes my parents not forcing me but as in their life style um and also I would also so yes the brethren in the church as well, yea I would say that they had influence as well</i> <i>And he has gone on to be with the Lord now but people like the late Superintendent.... um and um who would encourage and you know 'when are you going to give your heart to the Lord' 'what's holding you' and other mothers in the church would always be giving an encouraging word and their encouragement, wasn't in a forceful way, but their encouragement was made me think about making that decision sooner rather than later</i></p>	<p>Parents not forcing him Lifestyle Brethren in church</p> <p>Encouragement from superintendent</p> <p>Encouragement from Mothers in church</p>
8		<p><i>I think in fairness to the question mum and dad are Christians they have been Christians all their lives. It's not a question of my mum and dad changed my – no they have been a Christian all their lives but I think when I went to Leicester and I saw all the young people actually worshipping I thought maybe these persons</i></p>	<p>Parents</p> <p>Young people worshipping</p>

		<p><i>are actually really into this and wow it was convention and a university hall and it was wow - they worshipped the whole weekend you could feel it praise and worshipping like and when the message came it was relevant to me it was what got me to thinking these young people and I thought wow you slept over in a room and the whole weekend the people in the van were speaking in tongues and the people were back in the dorms like you couldn't get away from it but It was mind blowing</i></p>	<p>Worshipped whole weekend</p> <p>Message (sermon)-relevant</p> <p>Mind blowing</p>
9		<p><i>My mother was someone who has always prayed for me and um you know amongst everything else she was always encouraging me to be a child of God um she did so with me more than the others, strangely enough, but um that she was a great encourager and there were other individuals within our church er to outline our church um was a very powerful church we had people that were there in my view who were role models um just to name a fewand there's a whole lot of people that were there you know</i></p>	<p>Mother praying</p> <p>Encouragement from mother</p> <p>Other individuals within church</p> <p>Powerful church</p> <p>Role models in church</p>
10		<p><i>Well I think my</i></p>	<p>Christian</p>

		<p><i>upbringing so I had this Christian upbringing from day one church life from day one err my earliest remembrance of church I have memories going back since I was about 2 years old –</i></p> <p>Wow</p> <p><i>So I can remember being carried into church in the West Indies and they used to have all night prayer meetings and we used to as we grew up used to be there and sleep on the bench at the back while all the folks were praying and singing and so all my life has been revolved around church life</i></p> <p><i>So it wasn't a big thing to say make a decision</i></p> <p><i>Church life and the concepts of right and wrong yea I think that was the corner stone yea there was a strong solid idea of what's right and what's wrong, what's godly and what's not</i></p>	<p>upbringing</p> <p>Earliest memories of church when he was 2</p> <p>Prayer meetings</p> <p>Life revolved around church life, concepts of right and wrong</p>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you have any specific classes/teaching e.g. New Believers' Classes/Baptism classes 	<p><i>No I can't say I did cause when I when I got baptised I remember when I got saved it was quite a number of young people who got saved at round about the same time and they all came for Baptism and they all came for pre baptism classes but I didn't go.</i></p> <p>How come</p> <p><i>I don't know maybe there was indecision</i></p>	<p>No classes</p> <p>A number of young people in church</p>

		<p><i>in my mind; maybe there was questioning in my mind at that time and they were saying come on Jeff get Baptised together I didn't it was 2 years after actually I got baptised and I didn't tell anybody, my mum and dad had got saved at that time and my step mum and my dad got remarried and baptised and I didn't even tell them.</i></p> <p>So you knew there was a baptism</p> <p><i>I knew there was a baptism happening in Brockley and I knew my mum and dad were going to be baptised but I hadn't told anybody. I attended no classes I just thought well yes I am going to do this at this time yes and I just literally you know followed them on the day and said you know I am getting baptised and they said 'what you're getting baptised' and I said yea you know and I remember telling Elder...s at the time that I was going to do it that night</i></p> <p>So did you have any classes afterwards – did they say so this is what you have done</p>	<p>indecision questioning baptised 2 years after</p> <p>secret</p> <p>Baptised at same time as parents</p>
		<p><i>No to be honest with you I didn't I was involved um I got involved in the Sunday School and I was going to Sunday</i></p>	<p>involved in Sunday School, encouraged by teacher to teach class, teaching through practical</p>

		<p><i>School at that time I had a good teacher who was always encouraging me and that was Evangelist at the time and she was head of the Sunday school at at the time, we had moved toby then and she was encouraging me and she was on the verge I think to move and she always encouraged me to come and take the class and teach the class and I think that helped me and then obviously the Youth Services were attended at the time Mother was in charge of the Youth and young people then and I was always encouraged to give an exhortation or to lead a testimony or to lead a service initially yea so um yes that was my teaching</i></p> <p>Ok - so really you are saying that New Believers classes or Baptism classes were on offer but you didn't take it up</p> <p><i>No I didn't take it</i></p>	<p>ministry, exhorting or leading testimony service</p>
2		<p>So you had New Believers classes – did you have Baptism classes</p> <p><i>No I kind a got baptised spontaneously. Spontaneously in the fact that it wasn't planned</i></p> <p>Ok and afterwards did you have classes</p> <p><i>Yea</i></p>	<p>Spontaneous baptism</p>

3		No	No classes
4		<p><i>Yes um a lot of other people didn't go through the same process I did but I thought I'm an over thinker if someone asks me – if someone asks me a question I don't just answer the question I think why has she asked the question. How come she said it that way OK I am very um I like to think so if I am going to jump into something I was quite aware that this was not a joke this was eternity this was what had people shouting up and down in conventions so if I am going to do this, you know when we see we grow up with mental images of big grown men bawling and thumping up and down and running round the building I knew it was serious and if I was going to enter this um with seriousness then I needed more knowledge than I already had so then I did enter the classes even though it was kind a like you can you didn't have to but I went to New Believers Classes and after that there's a Baptism classes and then I went after that and then I received my baptism</i></p>	<p>Not a joke Eternity</p> <p>It was why people were shouting up and down in conventions, crying and running around building</p> <p>Seriousness</p> <p>Needed more knowledge</p> <p>Voluntarily attended new Believers Classes and Baptism Classes</p>

		<i>after that</i>	
5		<i>Now that I am older now, I know that I should have had. I had a few but not intense</i>	A few
6		<p><i>I had baptism classes a few weeks before I got baptised and it was just touching on like what baptism really means and stuff like that there was a lot of topics that we could learn and it gave us a wider insight as to what we were doing so um it's not like we went into it blind we were taught what it means to be baptised and how we should uphold um our lifestyle as a baptised Christian.</i></p> <p>And was that over a period of weeks</p> <p><i>Definitely over a period of weeks, so we would go I think it was Monday every Monday evening and 2 elders of the church would teach a whole lot of us who were going to be baptised</i></p>	<p>Baptism class</p> <p>Didn't go into it blind</p> <p>Taught how to uphold lifestyle as a baptised Christian</p> <p>Weekly classes taught by 2 elders</p>
7		<i>No no no and that is one I mean years on if anything I would say that's one of the um shortfalls I would say at the time where I gave my life to the Lord and no classes before and not necessary any support in classes afterwards as a young believer – that's was I think was missing a lot yea</i>	<p>No classes</p> <p>No support</p> <p>Support missing</p>

8		No	No classes
9		<i>We had about 3 weeks of new believer's class with Pastor.... myself, D... and another guy T... just the 3 of us.</i>	Classes with Pastor
10		<i>No um oh we didn't have one in the church at the time um but well my dad was a Sunday school teacher I remember there was some teaching thing that was going on but he said he would do it himself yea but I can't remember getting it yea so um my development from that Wednesday night was solely based on that conviction and my continual participation in the church I note that there were one or two individuals that were um talked to me in a kind a motherly fatherly way yea Sometimes the older folks would talk to you and encourage you in certain ways that gives you a boost but actual Christian development it came by experiences it wasn't really any in depth training apart from what I picked up from Sunday school and taking part in the YP group and such like</i>	<p>None at time- Dad was teacher and should have done it</p> <p>Development on conviction</p> <p>Participation in church</p> <p>Encouragement from older folks in motherly fatherly way</p> <p>Encouragement gave boost</p> <p>No in depth training</p> <p>Picked up in Sunday School and YP group</p>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When were you baptised? How long 	2 years	long gap between saved and baptised

	was that after you became a Christian?		
2		<p><i>It was a Youth Convention so it was May maybe about 3 – 4 years ago.</i></p> <p>So how long were you a Christian before you got baptised?</p> <p><i>Um it was a while you are talking maybe a year and a bit maybe two years</i></p>	Possibly another 2 year gap
3		<p><i>Youth Convention May</i></p> <p>How long ago</p> <p><i>4 years ago</i></p> <p>So how long were you a Christian before you got baptised?</p> <p><i>2 years</i></p>	2 year gap
4		<p><i>No I was baptised it kind a happened simultaneously like it does with us</i></p> <p>Right</p> <p><i>So I thought about – it must have been a Saturday and I was in my bedroom on a Saturday and I said ok I don't just want to go to Church for Church sake because I actually want to go to Heaven and then on the Sunday I approached my Pastor and said 'Sir can I attend the classes after service, I would like to get baptised and you know I am really thinking about myself cause you know thinking about salvation coming to New Believers class'</i></p>	<p>Made a decision about baptism at the same time as commitment</p> <p>Made a commitment and then decided to go to baptism classes</p>

		<i>period, it was this is what we are going to do why you believe it this is what baptism means and this is why we believe it is important and then another week to say ok probably a week before the baptism ok you have to bring extra clothes you have to do this you know the logistics</i>	
5		<i>Um actually I kind a started the movement off in the Youth Department in where we were because I was the first one to get saved and slowly I was kind a followed. I would say about a year later year and a half later got baptism maybe 2 years</i>	2 year gap but first to be baptised and others followed- started a movement
6		<i>Err I always considered myself a Christian but I was committed until I made the decision to get baptised and that was when I was 14</i> So you got baptised before you were 14 <i>No when I was 14 – yea</i>	Always considered self a Christian- baptised at 14
7		<i>Um I was baptised I can remember yea I was baptised at the age of um I can't remember the year but I can remember the age that was about 16 yea about 3 years in between and yea that was yea it was a long stand but it was voluntary sort of thing um because I believe and also my parents as well that um just to in that</i>	3 year gap Long stand-voluntary Didn't want to make a

		<p><i>period not that I wasn't fully committed but I didn't want to cause I've seen it since happen just at that time and then go back. So during that 3 years I was faithful to the Lord attended church um Sunday school, youth meeting, everything but I just um building up my relationship with the Lord and then age 16 right time for baptism so go and do it then it was a conscious decision it wasn't a decision maybe I should have had a trial period I just needed to settle during that 3 years period</i></p> <p>And there was no pressure when to get baptise from church</p> <p><i>Yea ok there was that pressure yes when I you going to get baptised um yea no what are you waiting for but at the end of the day it's a personal decision yea</i></p>	<p>commitment and then go back</p> <p>Building relationship with God</p> <p>Pressure but resisted</p>
8		<p><i>I think I was about 19 I think soon after I knew church inside out and if someone was to teach me anything it wouldn't be anything new to me I knew it kind a thing which makes you in a way it could be kind a bad thing you get used to immune to Jesus coming back yea yea I am a I can recite that so I think baptism classes I don't think</i></p>	<p>No baptism classes but knew the routine</p>

		<i>they had them well I'm not aware of any baptism classes.</i>	
9		<i>Um it was Good Friday 1979 um I got baptised at M... Road</i>	A few months as from previous response (Saved December 1978)
10		<i>Umm after not long yea a few months I can't remember exactly but it was shortly after Oh so you got saved and then that was it Yea</i>	Few months
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When were you received into membership and did you have any preparation classes for membership? 	<i>No again um I didn't it was a few months before laugh ha ha ha A few months after before obviously they had Bible studies that I tried to attend and you know and then the Youth meeting was always my sort of thing and my encouragement and my teaching and going to the youth group and young people's meeting</i>	attended bible studies, youth meetings and teaching in Sunday School did not attend preparation classes
2		<i>After I was Baptised it wasn't long maybe 2 or 3 months max And did you have any preparation classes for membership Yea yea we did</i>	Preparation classes
3		<i>No not that I can remember - Probably like a month afterwards</i>	No classes
4		<i>Straight after. In our church we have um baptism in the morning and then in the evening um they hand out your membership</i>	No classes, membership straight afterwards

		<p><i>certificate unless you say that you won't take membership. So it's a bit shell shocked cause when you come out of the pool I felt that I was floating, I felt that I was on a cloud and then you know then afterwards you don't really I feel in hindsight you don't allow people to think where they may be best placed um I always say that in my area there are 70 black run churches in the town, yes over 70 in that one small town and some have buildings, some have no buildings, some in living rooms some in church yards you know all different and I think sometimes when you say because I grew up in COGIC it was just assumed, I wasn't asked a formal question I thought there would be a question would you be taking membership I just assumed that other people it can be a bit you know where you would be placed. But it was in the evening straight after.</i></p> <p>You don't have membership classes</p> <p><i>Um at the time no</i></p> <p>But you do now</p> <p><i>I think so</i></p> <p>Were you prepared for membership</p> <p><i>I think it was always assumed that I was always a member which is very funny</i></p>	<p>Felt as though floating after baptism- on a cloud</p> <p>Membership was assumed</p>
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		<i>with us</i>	
5		<i>We had a few weeks of preparation classes um probably not as thorough as it should have been and um I can't remember really if it was the year and half later if we received membership because at the time it was just me on my own cause as I said the others came along it came to a point when there was about 6 – 7 of us got baptised together so maybe about a year and half later Membership soon after baptism</i>	Preparation classes – membership soon after
6		<i>Um I can't remember preparation I think I had one evening like a rehearsal of the right hand of fellowship but um I don't think it was like a continued thing</i>	Evening of rehearsal of right hand of fellowship
7		<i>There was no preparation classes for membership as far as I remember um all that I remember is that um the Right Hand of Fellowship and the manual was brought out and you were told ok if you're going to another church you let your Pastor know where your offerings and so and so go and that was it.</i> And you received the Right Hand of Fellowship was it like the day after or that day <i>It would have been</i>	No preparation

		<i>how they did it at that time it was the next night after you got baptised whenever it was the first supper after baptism, you were received in fellowship</i>	
8		<p><i>Yea ah its customary that after you get baptised the next first Sunday you would be received in so I was received in shortly afterwards maybe a couple of weeks</i></p> <p><i>Yes I think there were oh gosh they was so far we did discuss I think we did discuss um what it was to be a member and how to conduct yourself things very general things I don't think anybody had anything specific that they really new or they talked about</i></p> <p>Specific as to the Church of God in Christ</p> <p><i>No</i></p>	Received in shortly afterwards- Discussion about membership
9		<p><i>There was no preparation classes for membership</i></p> <p><i>Um and we received shortly after I think the first Sunday following Good Friday</i></p>	No preparation classes- Received in shortly afterwards
10		<p><i>Um I was received into membership the following Sunday</i></p> <p>That was after your baptism</p> <p><i>Yep got baptised Wednesday and the following Sunday incorporated into the membership no classes</i></p>	Received into membership shortly afterwards- no preparation classes

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a child, did you have any sense of belonging to the church or being a member before being given the right hand of fellowship? 	<p><i>Yes I felt I belonged in the church I was always welcomed you know as a young boy it was always – I remember the late Superintendent ... in.... we used to go round the back and playing table tennis and round the back they used to come looking for us and we used to disappear and that was always a bit of fun, bit of mischievousness and I remember always running and hiding you know church was always a place that I felt safe. Yes.</i></p>	<p>belonged, welcomed</p> <p>fun with adults,</p> <p>feeling safe</p>
2		<p><i>Yea – yea cause like all the activities that we do kind a like you're from that church part of that church cool and then when we went like to have a competition between other churches you were known to be from that church</i></p> <p><i>So I would say yea</i></p> <p>So you would always say that you belonged</p> <p><i>Yea to that Church</i></p>	<p>Yes through competitive activities between the church</p>
3		No	
4		<p><i>Yes most definitely, yes most definitely that was my I always wanted to be in the Brownies and my</i></p>	

		<i>mum said No you don't need no Brownies, your church is YP and that's why being a member of YP is part of my identity. So even it didn't matter it kind a whether I decided to take salvation or not COGIC and my Church was always a part of my identity always</i>	COGIC part of identity
5		<i>I suppose because we were Sunday School members – members of the Sunday School and also Youth Dept and we also had a wonderful Youth Leader so he made us feel very much and she made us feel very much a part of the Church as Sunday school pupils our Sunday school teacher there was quite a lot of us and we felt part of the church and we didn't know any better as such anyway</i>	Felt a part of the church through Sunday School and Youth Department
6		<i>Yea because there were a lot of obviously my mum and dad were quite known in the church so I did have a sense of belonging as like they were my family. Like everybody it weren't just people I saw on Sunday I would see them like every Friday stuff like that so we grew as a family and even now those people that were there are still</i>	Sense of belonging – Grew up as part of a family

		<i>there so we are most – the people I grew up with we call ourselves 'family'. So yea I did feel like I belonged.</i>	
7		<i>Um I would say yes yea err very much so just part of like the church family you felt like you know you didn't feel like an outsider or anything like that no you know it was um more sort of I guess a second home, a home away from home everybody knew everybody else and stuff it felt like part of another family</i>	Part of Church family Not an outsider A home away from home
8		<i>Yes as I was saying Church wasn't optional Church was you had to go and you had to be really sick not to go so we didn't challenge the idea of going to church I didn't I could do everything I could pray, sing so I wasn't going to because it was indoctrinated into me so I do remember becoming a Christian wasn't a big thing in my eyes so for a while it seemed a logical step but it was a step that happened, it wasn't that I fell into it, I was totally outside my mind COGIC zone, I went to a completely different Church which I had never been to before and the experience of meeting all these people and all these young people and</i>	Church was not optional Didn't challenge the idea of going to church Indoctrinated Seemed a logical step

		<i>services were conducted very well that I must say it was really spot on and it was geared to young people you couldn't get out of it</i>	
9		<i>Um No</i>	No elaboration on not belonging
10		<i>Belonging, yes, but not a member because there were certain activities you know that members did but I had a sense of belonging but not a member</i> You were able to distinguish those two early on	Belonging but not a member
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What difference did it make in receiving the right hand of fellowship? 	<i>Just that it was belonging I had a voice more of a voice being a member you know perhaps you know I couldn't have that voice although I didn't feel anyway isolated at all I think I was still looked upon as a member you know, cause when I got baptised people couldn't believe I wasn't baptised, couldn't believe they used to say but you got saved and I said you know but they couldn't believe that I hadn't been baptised . People thought I was already baptised and I was already a member of the Church, but I wasn't at the time</i>	<p>belonging, had a voice</p> <p>although didn't feel isolated looked on as a member</p>
2		<i>It was kind a I think it was like a next step it kind a made you realise um alright maybe now you are</i>	<p>Next step</p> <p>Adult and not just another kid doing activities</p>

		<i>an adult in the church before you were just there – you were part of it but now you are an adult in the church rather than just another kid doing the activities if that makes sense.</i>	
3		<i>That I become more involved with the church um</i>	Involvement
4		<p><i>I could go to the meetings</i></p> <p>Oh right ha ha</p> <p><i>When I was you know, I could go to the meetings ah I did feel involved before because I was quite active. I could attend the meetings, I was always involved in YP I couldn't miss a YP I couldn't miss a Sunday School and even by then I think I was singing in Praise and Worship on Youth Sundays and I would always have to prepare a small reading and I was looking back at it probably in ministry and ministering way before I was baptised or a member but actual specific membership for me at that time I could attend the Members meetings and hear all the goings on</i></p>	Attendance at members meetings
5		<i>Um not a lot of in some respects not a lot of difference um probably the fact that ok we have become a member and at that time being a teenager um didn't really look at it – I probably</i>	At the time, the next step

		<p><i>looked at it different to how I would look at it now as an older person I think</i></p> <p><i>As an older person you think more of a part whereas as a teenager you just think it's the next step.</i></p>	
6		<p><i>Um it just made it official. That I mean it kind a added to the fact that I'm a new creature I'm a new person because I've decided to take on this new lifestyle of being committed to God so I was it was like just official membership into the body of Christ at a conscious age so where I was conscious of where I was doing because obviously when I was younger I was just here in church and even though I felt belonging here I wasn't a technical member so</i></p> <p><i>Could attend members meetings; um I think you were taken a bit more seriously if you had an opinion and if you were brave enough to voice it I should say um and I think as I think as a whole I think as a whole you were taken more seriously as a Christian in that particular branch or yea I um and they are the most immediate differences I can think of err but after I think everything was more</i></p>	<p>Official</p> <p>Added to new creation, new person with new lifestyle</p> <p>Committed to God</p> <p>Conscious age</p> <p>Although felt belonged not a technical member Attend members meetings Taken a bit more seriously if brave enough to voice opinion</p> <p>Taken seriously as a Christian</p>
7			

		<i>or less as you know as routine as normal as before</i>	Same routine as before
8		<i>I think you could attend members meetings but I think we could attend members meetings I think that was it really it wasn't glorious because you're a member Members meeting and what you say in the background you sit and you listen Members meeting I never thought it was a nice time I never used to enjoy them</i>	Attend members meetings
9		<i>You didn't have to look at anybody else taking the communion anymore ha ha ha joint laughter But that was one thing because I thought that even though I was saved you obviously can't take the communion But I obviously felt that I was a member of the body of Christ by virtue of being saved but I it was like the fellowship just rubber stamped it</i>	Taking communion Fellowship rubber stamped member of body of Christ
10		<i>You were part of a group, belonging- feeling comfortable, nothing to do with salvation as you're already saved but comfortable with others in the faith</i>	Part of a group Belonging, feeling comfortable

Appendix 6

Finding Themes

Codes	Themes	Final Themes
Experience of Sunday School Sunday School activities Being picked up-van driver-teachers, Remembering pioneers of the church Musicians, guitars, loud, shouting, singing, choir, always attended activities Being together with young people and activities sessions with youth leaders youth conventions, confidence in performing	Memories of church Influence of Sunday School and Youth Departments Early positive experiences	Agencies of the Church
Family, Church family Belonging, Life style of adults, encouragement from adults, significant adults, the lady in the corner, people not in forefront of ministry, Church leaders, parents, Clearing up the church, opportunities to perform	Family Encouragement from adults Participation in meaningful tasks	Family (incorporating Biblical and African concepts) subthemes of belonging, identity
Prayer, meditation, seriousness, spending time with the Lord, devotion, dependence on God reading the Word, reading media, principles of the Word, acting on the Word, Being changed through the Word trusting although some requests not granted Christian literature	Personal and family devotions Living by the Word Having a changed life - holiness	Prayer, Fasting and Bible reading
Exhortations, involvement Learning by experience	Liturgy Experiential learning – leading to life of holiness	Alternate pedagogy

baby to adult hood journey, process, Christian pathway, trusting God ongoing sanctification, influence of speakers, moving from past and living as a child of God, attending prayer meetings, seriousness		
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Appendix 7



The Symbol of the Church Of God In Christ is an outgrowth of the Presiding Bishop's Coat of Arms which has become quite familiar to the Church. The design of the Official Seal of the Church was created in 1973 and adopted in the General Assembly in 1981 (April Session).

The obvious GARNERED WHEAT in the center of the seal represents all of the people of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. The ROPE of wheat which holds the shaft together represents the Founding Father of the Church, Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, who, at the call of the Lord, banded us together as a Brotherhood of Churches in the First Pentecostal General Assembly of the Church, in 1907.

The date in the seal has a two-fold purpose; Firstly, to tell us that Bishop Mason received the baptism of the Holy Ghost in March 1907; and, Secondly, to tell us that it was because of this outpouring that Bishop Mason was compelled to call us together in November of 1907, to organize the Church Of God In Christ.

The RAIN in the background represents the Latter Rain or the End-time Revivals which brought about the emergence of our Church along with other Pentecostal Holiness Bodies in the same era. The rain also serves as a challenge to the Church to keep Christ in the center of our worship and service, so that He may continue to use the Church Of God In Christ as one of the vehicles of Pentecostal Revival before the return of the Lord.

<http://www.cogic.org/our-foundation/our-cogic-seal/>

Appendix 8

Our Statement of Faith (Church of God in Christ)

We believe the Bible to be the inspired and only infallible written Word of God.

We believe that there is only One God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and, God the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the blessed Hope, which is the rapture of the Church of God, which is in Christ, at His return.

We believe that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

We believe that regeneration by the Holy Ghost is absolutely essential for personal salvation.

We believe that the redemptive work of Christ on the Cross provides healing for the human body in answer to believing prayer.

We believe that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to believers who ask for it.

We believe in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy and separated life in the present world.

<http://www.cogic.org/our-foundation/our-statement-of-faith/>

Appendix 9

Main Doctrines of COGIC

What We Believe

THE BIBLE

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God and contains one harmonious and sufficiently complete system of doctrine. We believe in the full inspiration of the Word of God. We hold the Word of God to be the only authority in all matters and assert that no doctrine can be true or essential, if it does not find a place in this Word.

THE FATHER

We believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Author and Creator of all things. The Old Testament reveals God in diverse manners, by manifesting his nature, character, and dominions. The Gospels in the New Testament give us knowledge of God the “Father” or “My Father”, showing the relationship of God to Jesus as Father, or representing Him as the Father in the Godhead, and Jesus himself that Son (St. John 15:8, 14:20). Jesus also gives God the distinction of “Fatherhood” to all believers when he explains God in the light of “Your Father in Heaven” (St. Matthew 6:8).

THE SON

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Second person in the Godhead of the Trinity or Triune Godhead. We believe that Jesus was and is eternal in his person and nature as the Son of God who was with God in the beginning of creation (St. John 1:1). We believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin called Mary according to the scripture (St. Matthew 1:18), thus giving rise to our fundamental belief in the Virgin Birth and to all of the miraculous events surrounding the phenomenon (St. Matthew 1:18-25). We believe that Jesus Christ became the “suffering servant” to man; this suffering servant came seeking to redeem man from sin and to reconcile him back to God, his Father (Romans 5:10). We believe that Jesus Christ is standing now as mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5)

THE HOLY GHOST

We believe the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, proceeds from the Father and the Son, is of the same substance, equal to power and glory, and is together with the Father and the Son, to be believed in, obeyed, and worshipped. The Holy Ghost is a gift bestowed upon the believer for the purpose of equipping and empowering the believer, making him a more effective witness for service in the world. He teaches and guides one into all truth (John 16:13; Acts 1:8, 8:39).

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST

We believe that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is an experience subsequent to conversion and sanctification and that tongue-speaking is the consequence of the baptism in the Holy

Ghost with the manifestations of the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; Acts 10:46, 19:1-6). We believe that we are not baptized with the Holy Ghost in order to be saved (Acts 19:1-6; John 3:5). When one receives a baptismal Holy Ghost experience, we believe one will speak with a tongue unknown to oneself according to the sovereign will of Christ. To be filled with the Spirit means to be Spirit controlled as expressed by Paul in Ephesians 5:18-19. Since the charismatic demonstrations were necessary to help the early church to be successful in implementing the command of Christ, we therefore, believe that a Holy Ghost experience is mandatory for all men today.

MAN

We believe that man was created holy by God, composed of body and soul. We believe that man, by nature, is sinful and unholy. Being born in sin, he needs to be born again, sanctified and cleansed from all sins by the blood of Jesus. We believe that man is saved by confessing and forsaking his sins, and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that having become a child of God, by being born again and adopted into the family of God, he may, and should, claim the inheritance of the sons of God, namely the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

SIN

Sin, the Bible teaches, began in the angelic world (Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-20), and is transmitted into the blood of the human race through disobedience and deception motivated by unbelief (I Timothy 2:14). Adam's sin, committed by eating of the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, carried with it permanent pollution or depraved human nature to all his descendants. This is called "**original sin.**" Sin can now be defined as a volitional transgression against God and a lack of conformity to the will of God. We, therefore, conclude that man by nature, is sinful and that he has fallen from a glorious and righteous state from which he was created, and has become unrighteous and unholy. Man, therefore, must be restored to his state of holiness from which he has fallen by being born again (St. John 3:7).

SALVATION

Salvation deals with the application of the work of redemption to the sinner with his restoration to divine favor and communion with God. This redemptive operation of the Holy Ghost upon sinners is brought about by repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ which brings conversion, faith, justification regeneration, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Repentance is the work of God, which results in a change of mind in respect to man's relationship to God. (St. Matthew 3:1-2, 4:17; Acts 20:21). Faith is a certain conviction wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, as to the truth of the Gospel and a heart trust in the promises of God in Christ (Romans 1:17, 3:28; St. Matthew 9:22; Acts 26:18). Conversion is that act of God whereby He causes the regenerated sinner, in his conscious life, to turn to Him in repentance and faith (II Kings 5:15; II Chronicles 33:12-13; St. Luke 19:8, 9; Acts 8:30). Regeneration is that act of God by which the principle of the new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of soul is made holy and the first holy exercise of this new disposition is secured. Sanctification is that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Ghost, by which He delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God and enables him to perform good works (Romans 6:4;5:6; Colossians 2:12; 3:1).

ANGELS

The Bible uses the term “angel” (a heavenly body) clearly and primarily to denote messengers or ambassadors of God with such scripture references as Revelations 4:5, which indicates their duty in heaven to praise God (Psalm 103:20), to do God’s will (St. Matthew 18:10) and to behold his face. But since heaven must come down to earth, they also have a mission to earth. The Bible indicates that they accompanied God in the Creation, and also that they will accompany Christ in His return in Glory.

DEMONS

Demons denote unclean or evil spirits; they are sometimes called devils or demonic beings. They are evil spirits, belonging to the unseen or spiritual realm, embodied in human beings. The Old Testament refers to the prince of demons, sometimes called Satan (Adversary) or Devil, as having power and wisdom, taking the habitation of other forms such as the serpent (Genesis 3:1). The New Testament speaks of the Devil as Tempter (St. Matthew 4:3) and it goes on to tell the works of Satan, The Devil, and Demons as combating righteousness and good in any form, proving to be an adversary to the saints. Their chief power is exercised to destroy the mission of Jesus Christ. It can well be said that the Christian Church believes in Demons, Satan, and Devils. We believe in their power and purpose. We believe they can be subdued and conquered as in the commandment to the believer by Jesus. “In my name they shall cast out Satan and the work of the Devil and to resist him and then he will flee **(WITHDRAW)** from you.” (St. Mark 16:17).

THE CHURCH

The Church forms a spiritual unity of which Christ is the divine head. It is animated by one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. It professes one faith, shares one hope, and serves one King,. It is the citadel of the truth and God’s agency for communicating to believers all spiritual blessings. The Church then is the object of our faith rather than of knowledge. The name of our Church, **“CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST”** is supported by I Thessalonians 2:14 and other passages in the Pauline Epistles. The word **“CHURCH”** or **“EKKLESIA”** was first applied to the Christian society by Jesus Christ in St. Matthew 16:18, the occasion being that of his benediction of Peter at Caesarea Philippi.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the second coming of Christ; that He shall come from heaven to earth, personally, bodily, visibly (Acts 1:11; Titus 2:11-13; St. Matthew 16:27; 24:30; 25:30; Luke 21:27; John 1:14, 17; Titus 2:11) and that the Church, the bride, will be caught up to meet Him in the air (I Thessalonians, 4:16-17). We admonish all who have this hope to purify themselves as He is pure.

DIVINE HEALING

The Church of God in Christ believes in and practices Divine Healing. It is a commandment of Jesus to the Apostles (St. Mark 16:18). Jesus affirms his teachings on healing by explaining to His disciples, who were to be Apostles, that healing the afflicted is by faith (St. Luke 9:40-41). Therefore, we believe that healing by faith in God has scriptural support and ordained authority. St. James’ writings in his epistle encourage Elders to pray for the sick, lay hands

upon them and to anoint them with oil, and that prayers with faith shall heal the sick and the Lord shall raise them up. Healing is still practiced widely and frequently in the Church of God in Christ, and testimonies of healing in our Church testify to this fact.

MIRACLES

The Church of God in Christ believes that miracles occur to convince men that the Bible is God's Word. A miracle can be defined as an extraordinary visible act of Divine power, wrought by the efficient agency of the will of God, which has as its final cause the vindication of the righteousness of God's word. We believe that the works of God, which were performed during the beginnings of Christianity, do and will occur even today where God is preached, Faith in Christ is exercised, The Holy Ghost is active, and the Gospel is promulgated in the truth (Acts 5:15; 6:8; 9:40; Luke 4:36, 7:14-15; 5:5-6; St. Mark 14:15).

THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

It is generally admitted that for an ordinance to be valid, it must have been instituted by Christ. When we speak of ordinances of the church, we are speaking of those instituted by Christ, in which by sensible signs the grace of God in Christ, and the benefits of the covenant of grace are represented, sealed, and applied to believers, and these in turn give expression to their faith and allegiance to God. The Church Of God In Christ recognizes three ordinances as having been instituted by Christ himself and therefore, binding upon the church practice.

A. THE LORD'S SUPPER (HOLY COMMUNION)

The Lord's Supper symbolizes the Lord's death and suffering for the benefit and in the place of His people. It also symbolizes the believer's participation in the crucified Christ. It represents not only the death of Christ as the object of faith which unites the believers to Christ, but also the effect of this act as the giving of life, strength, and joy to the soul. The communicant by faith enters into a special spiritual union of his soul with the glorified Christ.

B. FEET WASHING

Feet Washing is practiced and recognized as an ordinance in our Church because Christ, by His example, showed that humility characterized greatness in the Kingdom of God, and that service, rendered to others gave evidence that humility, motivated by love, exists. These services are held subsequent to the Lord's Supper; however, its regularity is left to the discretion of the Pastor in charge.

C. WATER BAPTISM

We believe that Water Baptism is necessary as instructed by Christ in St. John 3:5, **"UNLESS MAN BE BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT."**

However, we do not believe that water baptism alone is a means of salvation, but is an outward demonstration that one has already had a conversion experience and has accepted Christ as his personal Saviour. As Pentecostals, we practice immersion in preference to **"SPRINKLING"**, because immersion corresponds more closely to the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord (Colossians 2:12). It also symbolizes regeneration and purification

more than any other mode. Therefore, we practice immersion as our mode of Baptism. We believe that we should use the Baptismal Formula given us by Christ for all **"...IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST."** (St. Matthew 28:19)

<http://www.cogic.org/our-foundation/what-we-believe/>

Appendix 10



COGIC NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL VISION

Aim

- Share and teach the gospel so that students are encouraged to develop faith and knowledge of God through the Lord Jesus Christ and to strengthen their relationship with Him.

Objectives

- Develop and promote the highest standards and qualities of Christian Education within the Sunday School.
- Encourage teachers to create a friendly supportive environment that fosters the enjoyment of learning and faith formation.
- Promote a culture that ensures that every child is given confidence and skills to make a positive contribution to their church and the wider community.
- Support parents and carers in their role
- Celebrate excellence and disseminate best practice.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Promote the vision of the National Sunday School Department.

Ensure that every Church has a Sunday School Department with at least a Superintendent and a Secretary.

Meet regularly with Sunday School Superintendents for planning, communication and training.

Provide ongoing training for Sunday School teachers through annual conferences, at District and local level and to inform on other training opportunities.

Review the range of teaching materials available and to provide a list of available resources.

Review research/provide information into children's development, faith formation, child theology and developments in the field of teaching.

Encourage teachers to identify faith and learning needs of students so that they can be catered for and their confidence and skills enhanced.

Promote a culture where children are encouraged to develop and use their skills both within and outside the church setting.

Encourage Sunday School Teachers to encourage their students to accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

Promote and consistently review Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy

Encourage each local church to ensure strong links between Sunday School department and home so that parents/carers are kept fully informed of events and developments

Produce a quarterly newsletter – A rolling programme where a district is responsible for a quarter.

Promote the Sunday School through a Webpage on COGIC's website.

Make links with International COGIC Sunday School Department.

Visit each church at least biannually.

Promote interdepartmental links across the church.

National Sunday School Department 2009

Appendix 11

INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS EMBRACING THE GROWTH VISION OF COGIC Youth Dept 2014 - 2020

OUR VISION

We are committed to leading young people into a growing and fulfilling relationship with Jesus Christ. Creating an atmosphere where each individual can grow spiritually and socially.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- **To build COGIC Youth Ministries “Giving Youth Direction and Hope”.**
- **To equip our Youth with a ministry of excellence, thus empowering them to serve their generation and to live a prosperous and victorious life in Jesus Christ**
- **To increase our Youth membership annually by a minimum of 10%.**

AIMS

- **Build a strong spiritually active youth ministry in every local church.**
- **Provide spiritual, social, and career focus goals for every young person.**
- **Help young people to know and understand God’s calling and purpose for their life.**
- **Help young people to take their divinely ordered places in society, without having to compromise their faith in Jesus Christ.**

STRATEGY

- **Provide support to local youth groups.**
- **Identify and implement training plans for youth workers.**
- **Give young people training, resources and support to help them achieve their Spiritual goals.**
- **Reorganise the COGIC Youth Council.**
- **Help youth groups to establish relevant community links.**
- **Fully Integrate the COGIC Youth Marketing Team.**

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Use of a dynamic website to communicate with Church and Non-Church Youth.**
- **Review the terms of reference for the Youth Council**
- **Prayer and Intersession Teams/Sessions**
- **Establishing the COGIC Young Women of Excellence and Young Men of Valour program**
- **Expand our marketing strategy to include fund raising and agency collaboration.**
- **Discussing and helping to tackle topical Youth Issues e.g.**
 - **Knife & Gun Crime**
 - **Teenage Pregnancies**
 - **Financial Management etc.**
- **Taking the Church outside the church**
- **Communicating Youth Strategy through Quarterly Vision Magazine and Interactive Website.**